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LUIDENS, John Pershing, 1917-
THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE DUTCH
REFORMED CHURCH.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1969
History, modern

University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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Norman, Oklahoma

1969

THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE DUTCH

REFORMED CHURCH

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TO THE REV. ANTHONY LUIDENS

But Christ's own lore, and His apostles' twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himselve.

(Chaucer's Parson)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation could not have been completed without the generous assistance of many people. I am deeply indebted to Professor David W. Levy, whose wise and always constructive direction was valued through each phase of the work. Acknowledgment of indebtedness must also be extended to the other members of the doctoral committee, Professors Bryson D. Gooch, Rufus G. Hall, William E. Livezey, and Robert E. Shalhope.

My research was greatly assisted by several librarians and their staffs. In particular, gratitude is an obligation to Miss Mildred Schuppert of the Western Theological Seminary Library, Holland, Michigan; to Mr. Peter N. VandenBerge, lately of the Theological Seminary Library of New Brunswick, New Jersey; and to Mrs. Dorothea Ray and Mr. Tom Baker of the Central State College Library, Edmond, Oklahoma. A word of general appreciation is also due to the staffs of The New York Public Library, The New York Historical Society, Rutgers University Library, and the Hope College Library, Holland, Michigan.

A colleague, Professor Herman Fullgraf, read part of the manuscript, and I recognize my debt to him for

suggestions and for lending a most patient ear. I also wish to thank Mrs. Charles Coyner and Mrs. Francis Olney for their excellent typing and patient cooperation.

Finally, it is most fitting to pay tribute here to the late Professor Donnell M. Owings of the History Department, University of Oklahoma, under whom this project was initiated, and to which he gave his approval and encouragement.

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THE AMERICANIZATION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

At the opening of the Revolutionary era, the Dutch Reformed Church could look back upon almost a century and a half of colonial history, its arrival antedating that of all denominations except the Anglican Church in Virginia and the Congregational Separatists of Plymouth Bay. The tortuous path which led forward from their official planting at New Amsterdam in 1628 was marked by more difficulties and impediments than beset any other colonial Church. Indeed, that it survived at all was regarded by some clergymen as nothing less than a "divine miracle."

Many of the obstacles to the development of the Dutch Church were engendered simply by the frontier environment and were common to all colonial denominations and sects. These included a lack of clergymen and the funds to support them, a dispersal of the population, which hampered the advancement of institutional life, and capricious methods of communication. But there were other problems, peculiar to the Dutch Reformed Church, which retarded growth and limited

its influence chiefly to the provinces of New York and New Jersey. Among these were the ending of migration from the Netherlands, ecclesiastical dependence on the mother-church, the determination to maintain the Dutch language in church service and schoolroom, and the nationalistic sentiments pervading all of these. Finally, the English conquest produced ambivalent attitudes among the Dutch and left the Church in an anomalous position.

Beyond an occasional transient wish expressed by some isolated clergyman, there was no movement, until the fourth decade of the 18th century, which seriously considered autonomy for the Dutch churches in America--an autonomy which might include organization higher than the congregational level with authority to settle ecclesiastical questions, provide higher education, and train, license and ordain ministers without reference to Amsterdam. The development of an Americanizing movement stemmed from the ministry of the Reverend Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, who arrived in New York in January, 1720. Before departing to take up his ministry along the banks of the Raritan in rural New Jersey, Frelinghuysen was invited to preach to the City congregation. His message, both in content and style of delivery, shattered the slumbers of orthodox clergymen and congregation alike, and pre-figured the religious movement known as the "Great Awakening."

Frelinghuysen's vision of at least a semi-autonomous American Church had barely begun to take shape before his

death (ca. 1750), but his sons and his colleagues (many of whom he had trained) persisted in their efforts. A nominal success was achieved before the Revolution, but only at the cost of creating a bitter division in the Church which lasted from 1755 to 1772. The Articles of Union, which brought the two factions together was the first modification of the strict control claimed by and exercised from the Classis of Amsterdam. Before the new arrangement could bear much fruit, however, the Revolutionary blasts scattered the congregations, destroyed many churches and completely disrupted communication with the Netherlands.

Although the Dutch Reformed Church emerged from the Revolutionary era greatly weakened, there was little desire to resume the pre-war relationship with the Church in the Netherlands, or to plead for trans-Atlantic help in its rehabilitation. On the contrary, the impetus supplied by the achievement of national political independence, the example of other religious denominations creating autonomous Churches, and the urgency of its own needs propelled the Dutch Church rapidly toward complete ecclesiastical independence in the decade from 1783 to 1792. Through the able leadership of the Reverend John H. Livingston, the Classis of Amsterdam was tactfully but firmly informed that the American Church was assuming full control in the conduct of its affairs. The titles of "Classis" and "Synod" were assumed for the American judicatory units, replacing the

anomalous "Particular Body" and "General Body" upon which the Classis of Amsterdam had insisted in 1771-1772 to indicate an inferior relationship. The long-authorized Professorates in Theology and Languages were finally filled--but with American instead of Dutch appointments, thereby establishing the Reformed claim to the first theological seminary in America (1784). And between 1788 and 1792 a constitution was completed and adopted for the Dutch Reformed Church in the United States.

The achievement of autonomy, of course, did not in itself solve any of the problems of the Church, but it did permit the Church to seek solutions without reference to European limitations, and in terms reflecting the modified and modifying conditions of the new nation. This it did with much success, along with very noticeable failure, during the decade of the 1790's. The Dutch Church simply did not have the human and material resources to extend its ministry to the frontier--even among its own pioneering members, who were soon lost to other denominations, especially the Presbyterian. Rather, this new American Church had to be content with building narrow but solid foundations within the boundaries of New York and New Jersey, and with a slow extension. There it remained until a new wave of immigrants arrived from the Netherlands in the mid-nineteenth century and carried the Church into the heart of the continent.

This dissertation presents an account of the process by which the Dutch Reformed Church was Americanized. It is a truism that American history begins in Europe. This narrative originates in the Netherlands because the first step in the transformation of the Church was its transfer to America. As Europeans, the first settlers brought with them religious assumptions commonly shared by the people of the colonizing era. They accepted the principle of religious uniformity within a state, with disabilities for competing religions. All were accustomed to a close relationship between Church and State which cast them in mutually supporting roles. Furthermore, the transplanted Churches were regarded merely as extensions of a Mother Church. With the settlement of America, the patterns of thought and habits of conduct resulting from these assumptions eroded with each generation; under the influence of novel time-space and environmental factors, a new set of American assumptions was fashioned, infusing both thought and action. In common with the other religious bodies, the Dutch Reformed Church experienced these changes, so that by the middle of the eighteenth century a majority of the clergy and members had accepted the new outlook.

On the other hand, the history of New Netherland varies from that of the other colonies because it was planted by a non-English people, and differed from them in language, custom and government. In religious belief and

practice, too, there were divergencies, although with Pilgrim, Puritan and Presbyterian, the Reformed Church shared the Calvinist outlook. No attempt has been made to retell the history of the Dutch Reformed Church; nor is there any delineation of doctrinal subtleties. Instead, the progression of events by which the Dutch Church became a national and American denomination over a period of approximately two centuries has been set forth as thoroughly as possible.

CHAPTER I

EUROPEAN ORIGINS, AND THE COLONIAL CHURCH IN NEW NETHERLAND

The Netherlands Reformed Church originated in the second wave of the Reformation, having its source in the teachings and doctrine of John Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion (1536), to which it strictly adhered. Just prior to the outbreak of the Eighty Years War for Independence (1568-1648), missionaries carried Calvinism to the Spanish Lowlands from both France and Geneva. The severe Inquisitorial persecution under Philip II (1555-1598) fell even more heavily upon the new converts than had the earlier persecutions of his father, Charles V, against the Lutherans, Anabaptists, and Mennonites. Many of the harassed took flight to Edwardian and Elizabethan England, or to German Protestant states bordering the Lowlands, joining earlier exiles. To rally each other, during the numerous dark days which lay ahead, statements of creed, a liturgy, and a form of church organization were devised, based on the Genevan model. To a large extent, then, the Dutch Reformed Church was born in exile and deserved the

title which was adopted at the Synod of Wesel (1568): "The Netherland Churches which are waiting under the Cross."[1]

Very early in the revolt, zealous Calvinists succeeded in grafting a war of religion upon a conflict essentially political and nationalistic in its origins. William of Orange pleaded in vain for a policy of toleration which would unite Lowland Catholic and Protestant alike against the Spaniard; by 1574 he recognized the fact that the Calvinists were his most disciplined and constant--sometimes his only--warriors, and went over from the Catholic to the Reformed faith.

In the two maritime provinces, Holland and Zeeland, where between 1572 and 1576 the Dutch first gained control, the Calvinists persecuted and drove out the Catholics. In each locality they seized control of the government, established their own church organization, appropriated the churches and schools of the Catholics, and sought to convert the working classes by creating primary schools where instruction was given by teachers tested for their orthodoxy. This procedure was followed in each of the seven provinces north of the great-river line, as the Spanish were slowly defeated. By 1600, a minority of Calvinists--perhaps as small as ten percent of the population--monopolized public

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[1]Elton M. Eenigenburg, A Brief History of the Reformed Church (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Douma Publications, n.d.), p. 21.

worship.[2] The regent-oligarchs who controlled the government in city and province, although libertarians themselves, were unable to clamp down very tightly on this religious thrust because the Calvinists were the most ardent supporters of the war.[3]

By 1609, while Henry Hudson was establishing a Dutch claim to a share in North America, and the Pilgrim Fathers were settling at Leiden, independence was virtually assured for the northern provinces with the signing of the Twelve Years Truce. This armistice was unpopular with the Calvinists who hoped to recover control of the ten southern provinces by continuing the war. More important, the removal of the external threat immediately brought to the surface a series of inter-related religious, economic and political issues which divided the Dutch people for the next decade, and pointed up the constitutional weakness of their particularistic federal system. While the fundamental issue was between centralized government under the House of Orange or a weak federalism under Holland's leadership, the pretext for all issues was religious: the Arminian-Gomarist controversy. Church and State relationships were as deeply involved as doctrinal orthodoxy.

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[2]Bernard H. M. Vlekke, Evolution of the Dutch Nation (New York: Roy Publishers, 1945), p. 155.

[3]For detail, see Charles R. Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800. "The History of Human Society" Series (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 118-120.

Stated simply, the Calvinists had split over the dogma of predestination; a majority followed the strict interpretation of the theologian Gomarus, while the liberal minority sided with Arminius; both theologians were professors at the University of Leiden. When the majority attempted to secure the calling of a national synod to settle the controversy, Holland (relying on the religious particularism guaranteed by the Union of Utrecht, 1579) refused its assent and prevented the convocation. After years of acrimony, all the issues were at least temporarily resolved in the years 1617-1619. Prince Maurice of the House of Orange moved to the side of the Gomarists. Supporting him were the land provinces (envious of the prosperity of the maritime provinces), the army, and the orthodox Calvinists--all who wanted church interests to take precedence over political interests.[4] Even the ruling magistrates of Amsterdam abandoned their Province and its ruling oligarchy, headed by the Grand Pensionary, John van Oldenbarneveld, who now became the target of all the venom. He was arrested in 1618, given a mock trial, and beheaded on May 13, 1619, the victim of political murder.

His arrest cleared the stage for the convocation of the Synod of Dordrecht (Dort), which assembled on November 13, 1618, during the trial of Oldenbarneveld. Other significant results which underline the scope of the

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[4]Vlekke, p. 167.

victory for Orthodoxy were the eventual resumption of the war and (more to our purpose) the granting of the long-sought charter for the Dutch West Indies Company. Since well before 1600, ardent Calvinist refugees from Antwerp, along with Amsterdam investors, had been pressing for a charter similar to that of the East India Company. Their aim was to derive great profit by exploiting the Spanish empire in the western hemisphere. The Grand Pensionary and the peace party in Holland had managed to thwart every effort to secure such a patent from the States General.

The Synod of Dort convened as an international assembly of Calvinists, delegates being present from almost all the Reformed Churches of Europe. Of the more than one hundred present, twenty-seven represented the churches in Scotland, England, Switzerland, Hesse and the Palatinate, and all the main Churches of the Swiss tradition.[5] Missing, however, were the Huguenot delegates, whom the French government had forbidden to attend. Before this weighty assembly the Remonstrant-Arminians, led by the eloquent Episcopius, were given a hearing, dismissed, and banished from the Netherlands.

With elaborate and learned discussion, sharpened, no doubt, by the Arminian arguments, the Synod defined and

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[5]Charles E. Corwin, A Manual of the Reformed Church in America, 1628-1922 (5th ed.; New York: Board of Publication and Bible-School Work of the Reformed Church in America, 1922), p. xxv. Hereafter referred to as Manual.

approved a statement of Calvinist doctrine known as the "Canons of the Synod of Dort"--fifty-nine Articles of Faith under the headings of Divine Predestination, the Death of Christ, the Corruption of Man and his Redemption, and the Perseverance of the Saints. The statement on predestination reaffirmed that doctrine, but not in its "supralapsarian" (most extreme) form. As Chadwick summarized it, the Synod determined ". . . that the cause of election is the pure grace of God, without regard to good works, that grace once given cannot be lost altogether, that Christ died only for the elect, that grace is irresistible."[6]

The representatives of all the Reformed Churches signed the Canons on April 23, 1619, and the foreign delegates departed for their homes after the 154th session. The Dutch delegates, however, continued to sit as a National Synod for an additional twenty-five sessions before adjourning on May 29, 1619. Their work in this period is usually referred to as the "Post-Acta," and comprises eighty-six Rules of Church government. These Rules established at Dort generally conformed to the model established by Calvin and his successors at Geneva, and were shortly to be applied by the Netherlands Church to her congregations in America. In fact, they were followed without official modification until

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[6]Owen Chadwick, The Reformation, Vol. III of The Pelican History of the Church (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 220.

1771, and not extensively modified until the American church constitution of 1792.

There were four headings to the Rules: Offices; Ecclesiastical Assemblies; Doctrines, Sacraments and Usages; and Church Discipline.[7] Only four religious offices were recognized; these were Ministers of the Word, Teachers of Theology, Elders and Deacons. None of these was to serve in official capacity without being lawfully called--the term "call" being specifically defined. Ministers were not to move without proper credentials; roving pastorates were forbidden, except where there was no congregation, or where conditions of persecution existed. New clergymen were to receive systematic training, but "School-masters, mechanics, or others, who have not regularly studied, shall not be admitted to the ministry . . .,"[8] except under extremely restricted terms of examination by a Classis, with Synodical approbation. Proselyte-clergymen from other sects, and especially from the Catholic Church, were highly suspect and

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[7]"Rules of Church Government, Established in the National Synod, Held in Dordrecht, in the years 1618 and 1619," reproduced in Edward T. Corwin, A Digest of Constitutional and Synodical Legislation of the Reformed Church in America (New York: The Board of Publications of the Reformed Church in America, 1906), viii-lxxxvi. Hereafter cited as Digest.

[8]Ibid., Article VIII. Also consult Donald J. Bruggink, "The Historical Background of Theological Education," (Chapter I of "One Hundred Years in the Task of Theological Training,") The Reformed Review, Vol. 19, No. 4 (May, 1966), pp. 2-17.

were to be admitted to the ministry with great care, and only after a probationary period.

Teachers of Theology were ranked second to the ministers, and their duties were "to explain the holy scriptures, and vindicate the pure doctrine of the gospel against heresy and error." Local congregations were encouraged to raise public funds to support students of theology. Also on the local level, it was the duty of the Consistory to provide qualified schoolmasters for each congregation. In addition to reading, writing, grammar and the liberal sciences, they were to teach the catechism and the first principles of religion. Like the clergy, schoolmasters were required to subscribe to the Reformed Confession of Faith, or the Heidelberg Catechism as a substitute. To keep all offices up to the proper spiritual mark, each Classis was to authorize two or more of its oldest and most experienced members to visit all the churches in its jurisdiction, and to inquire whether ministers, consistories and schoolmasters were discharging their duties faithfully, adhering to sound doctrine, and observing church discipline--admonishing the negligent. To insure orthodoxy, all books and religious writings were to be submitted for inspection and approval prior to publication.

By the Rules of Church Order, a presbyterian form of church polity-midway between congregationalism and an

episcopal hierarchy--was established, providing church councils as governing bodies and courts at ascending levels. Four types of ecclesiastical assemblies were designated: Consistory, Classis, Particular Synod and General Synod. The Consistory was the governing body in each individual church. It was composed of the minister and an unspecified number of elders who were chosen for two year terms. The Classis bound together a number of neighboring churches, each of which sent an elder and the minister. In the Netherlands, the Classes in each of the seven provinces formed a Particular Synod; at the apex of the system was the General or National Synod which consisted of delegates from each of the provinces. Each of the three assemblies above the Consistory was made up of an equal number of ministers and elders. Church matters and problems not susceptible of settlement on one level could be appealed to a higher level.[9]

Of the four bodies, the Consistory alone appeared officially in America prior to the Revolutionary period (1772), because there were only separate churches and ministers. Article eighty-four of the Rules was specific: "No church shall exercise authority over another nor any Minister over his brethren in the ministry. . . . " However this system worked in the Netherlands, its adumbrated form

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[9]See Howard G. Hageman, Lily Among the Thorns (New York: The Half Moon Press, 1953), pp. 119-123, for a good brief description of the Reformed polity.

in America meant that all but extremely local or petty matters had to find their lengthy way across the Atlantic for settlement. The new environment also forced immediate modifications in the transplanted system. For instance, in Holland the Consistory consisted of the minister and elders only, but in the first American church (1628) deacons were added, setting a precedent which continues to the present time. Indeed, the first ordained minister in New Amsterdam appears to have appointed his Consistory in the absence of any such body.

Several additional items of the Post-Acta applied to the American churches must be noted. Provision was made for the use of two languages, Dutch and Walloon (French)--the latter because of the heavy migration of Calvinists from the Southern lowlands after the restoration, in 1585, of Spanish control and the Catholic religion. Also, "in things indifferent," foreign churches were not to be rejected although differing in custom and usage. This permitted the flexibility of the refugee church in Europe to continue in America, where the Dutch Reformed were joined by German and French Reformed and, in the earlier days by English and Scottish Presbyterians, with their slightly varying religious customs or Liturgy. The Synod authorized a new translation of the Bible, the first to be officially sanctioned by the Church; and, because the States-General sponsored its publication, it was known as the "Staten" Bible. Liturgical

forms were carefully prescribed at Dort, setting the holy days, special ceremonies and services, and stipulating the use of the Heidelberg Catechism. Finally, all hymns were prohibited in worship except the Psalms of David, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed and the songs of Mary and Zacharias, all as versified.

On May 28, 1619, with the stern-faced, long-bearded Johannes Bogermannus still in the president's chair after 180 sessions, the Synod of Dort endorsed its work and adjourned. The purity of Orthodox Calvinism had been maintained as the "true religion" although probably more than half the population of the Republic stood outside the Reformed Church. In spite of their successes, control of the State escaped them although, after 1651, "political Calvinism" secured for the Netherlands Reformed Church its position as an established or state church.[10] The merchant oligarchy--the Regents of Holland--remained libertarian in the Erasmian-humanistic tradition, and the guilder rather than the gospel was the symbol of seventeenth century Dutch capitalism. In the end, it was not the leaders of the Reformed Church but the Regents of Holland who emerged victorious in the contest between Church and Oligarchy to

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[10]Jan and Annie Romein, De Lage Landen Bij De Zee (Utrecht: Uitgeversmaatschappij W. De Haan, N.V., 1949), p. 370. "Political Calvinism" is described in this manner by Will and Ariel Durant: "Calvinist synods sought to determine political policy and to use the government for the enforcement of their creed. . . . " The Age of Reason Begins (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), p. 458.

determine national traditions, and ensure religious toleration.[11]

In 1621, as the war with Spain was rejoined, the Dutch West Indies Company was chartered by the States General of the United Provinces, partly to aid in the prosecution of the war. In this vast grant of authority to plunder Spanish colonial wealth along the shores of North and South America and in the Atlantic south of the Tropic of Cancer, no mention was made of religion, and little notice was taken of the Hudson River area. For the emphasis was to be on raiding and trading (which hardly called for theological acumen) and colonization was not envisaged. Nevertheless, the Netherlands Reformed Church shortly appeared in Brazil, in the Caribbean islands and in New Netherland. Our concern, hereafter, is with the last of these.[12]

In 1623 the Dutch were enjoying, in the midst of war, not only the prosperity resulting from their commercial supremacy, but also their "Golden Age" in art and literature. Under these contradictory conditions the West Indies Company planted New Netherland in the wide arch of Atlantic coast thus far marked only by English settlements at Jamestown

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[11]Vlekke, pp. 168, 180.

[12]A good brief summary, in Dutch, is found in W. R. Menkman, De Nederlanders in het Caraibische Zeegebied, waarin vervat De Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Antillen (Amsterdam: P. N. Van Kampen en Zoon, N.V., 1942), pp. 19-32. Also, in English, Pieter Geyl, "Liberty in Dutch History," Delta, Vol. I, No. 3 (Autumn, 1958), pp. 11-22.

and Plymouth. Sailing by way of the Canaries, the ship "New Netherlands" anchored in the Hudson River in May, 1624, with "thirty families, mostly Walloons," and permanent settlement began.[13] Within the next month or two, this group of 110 company servants was assigned to fur trading posts on the Delaware and the Connecticut, and at Manhattan and Fort Orange (Albany) on the Hudson to begin their six-year contracts. Thus early began the trading activities which spread people widely, making difficult the development of institutional life. While the first settlement was at Fort Orange (1624), the arrival of additional settlers and the purchase of Manhattan, in 1626, led to the establishment of New Amsterdam as the hub of the colony.

There is no record of the religious life of these first colonists, and the goals of the Company permit no talk of a "Wilderness Zion" or "A City Upon a Hill," no matter how pious the settlers. For the first two years there was no representative of the organized Church in the colony. In fact, the Company Charter of 1621 made no provision for the spiritual life of the settlers, and when the Consistory of Amsterdam protested the omission, the Company remedied this oversight, in 1623, by promising to recommend "religious

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[13]These Walloon families were undoubtedly Reformed refugees and exiles from the Spanish-Catholic Lowlands who had fled to the Northern Provinces. If they were rich they simply re-established their businesses; if skilled, they found employment in the expanding economy; if unskilled or farmers, they were in trouble.

services both on shipboard and on land."[14] Under the arrangement agreed upon by Church and Company, the Church would select the ministers and teachers for the trans-Atlantic settlements, while the Company would support them. (This involved no great concession by the Company, since the policy of colonization was not yet embarked upon.)

On March 28, 1624, the religious life in New Netherland was further regulated by the Lords Nineteen (Company Directors) in the "Provisional Order," the first plan of government, based largely on rules governing shipboard life. The second article provided:

> Within their territory they shall only worship according to the true Reformed Religion, as it is done within this country at present, and by a good Christian life they shall try to attract the Indians and other blind persons to the Knowledge of God and his Word, without however committing any religious persecutions . . . .[15]

Other important decisions affecting the religious life of the colony occurred the same year. The West Indian Company had been organized on the basis of chambers or offices in the five cities which served as centers for raising capital. The Directors, often known as the "Lords Nineteen," managed Company affairs from these centers.[16] The Synod of North

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[14]Charles E. Corwin, Manual, p. 2.

[15]Ibid., p. 3.

[16]I. H. Gosses and N. Japikse, Handboek tot de Staatkundige Geschiedenis van Nederland (s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1946) (3rd ed., revised and expanded by R. Post and N. Japikse) p. 483 for details charter W. I. Co. See also: Groen van Prinsterer, Handboek Der

Holland now decided that colonial churches should come under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Classes in which the chambers were located. Classes which were not in the coastal and commercial areas, and therefore had no chambers, were disgruntled at their exclusion from participating in the control of the colonial churches. Gradually the Amsterdam chamber, providing eight of the nineteen directors and most of the capital, became the headquarters for the Company's activities in New Netherland, while after 1636 the Classis of Amsterdam (acting through its "Committee ad res Exteras") became solely responsible for the welfare of the American churches subject only to the higher authority of the Synod of North Holland. This position of supremacy over the churches of America the Amsterdam Classis retained actively until the American revolution, and thereafter nominally until 1792.

The first organized religious life of the colony was entrusted to lay preachers known as "sieckentroosters" or "kranckenbesoekers," comforters or visitors of the sick, apparently following a practice adopted by the earlier East Indies service. Bastiaen Jansen Krol, a pious but semi-literate textile-worker, was examined by the Consistory of Amsterdam, accepted on December 7, 1623, and passed into the employment of the Company at a typical salary of between

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Geschiedenis van het Vaderland (Amsterdam: J. A. Wormser, 1895).

four and six hundred guilders per year.[17] His letter of instruction commissioned him to conduct prayers on shipboard, instruct and comfort the sick, and on Sundays to read from the scriptures and preach a sermon, taking care to "adorn his office with a christian and godly conduct." Strictly forbidden was the administration of the sacraments and other functions reserved to the ordained clergy.

Arriving in March, 1624, Krol was handicapped by his lack of authority to marry or to baptize; nor was there any church building. By November, he was back in Amsterdam before the Consistory, stating the colonists' urgent demand for a minister--all the more so as there were pregnant women "in the Virginiis" who wanted baptism for their children. The plea for the support of an ordained minister was rejected by the Company because the number of families was so small; however, although unordained, Krol was given permission by the Classis to perform the required sacraments himself. Krol was the only representative of the Reformed Church until he was joined (probably in July of 1626) by a second lay preacher, Jan Huygen (Huyck), a brother-in-law of the new governor Peter Minuit, who had arrived in May.

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[17]A. Eekhof, Jonas Michaelius, Founder of the Church in New Netherland (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff's Publishing Company, 1926), p. 3. The first chapter is devoted to Krol, with some mention of Huygen. For further information regarding salaries, see Boxer, Appendix II, pp. 300-303, "Some Salary Scales of Seafaring and Overseas Personnel." Pay for a qualified preacher (predikant) was 80 - 100 fl. per month.

The ministrations of these two men mark the introduction of Reformed services in America.

Officially, however, the Reformed Church in America[18] dates its origin from April, 1628, when the first ordained minister, the Reverend Jonas Michaelius, arrived at New Amsterdam. This pioneer of the cloth had signed for a three-year term of service with the Company, having already been briefly in their employment as minister at Fort Nasseu on the Guinea Coast. With Michaelius were his wife and two small daughters,[19] but the buffeting of a ten-week winter crossing of the Atlantic proved too much for his wife and she died seven weeks after their arrival at New Amsterdam, leaving the children as an extra concern for the minister.

Facing his loss with Christian resignation and his new task with some degree of energy and optimism, Michaelius set about the organization of the first church. His new parish covered hundreds of miles but contained less than three hundred people. In a letter dated August 11, 1628, written to a friend and colleague in Amsterdam, he described his little Consistory, and the celebration of the first Communion Table. Director General Minuit and lay preacher

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[18]This is the present official title of the Church, adopted in 1867, when the word "Dutch" was dropped. For various modifications of title since 1628, see C. E. Corwin, Manual, [xiii] - xiv.

[19]One son, for educational reasons was left with friends in the North Holland city of Hoorn.

Huygen were chosen as elders (both having held church office in the Dutch and French Reformed Churches in the German city of Wesel), while Krol, although stationed 150 miles up river at Fort Orange, was made deacon.

> At the first administration of the Lord's Supper which was observed, not without great joy and comfort to many, we had fully fifty communicants, Walloons and Dutch, a number of whom made their first confession of faith before us, and others exhibited their church certificates. Others had forgotten to bring their certificates with them, not thinking that a church would be formed and established here; and some who brought them had lost them unfortunately in a general conflagration, but they were admitted upon the satisfactory testimony of others to whom this was known, and also upon their daily good deportment, since one cannot observe strictly all the usual formalities in making a beginning under such circumstances.[20]

Beginning with Dominie Michaelius and continuing throughout the period of Dutch control, the problems of the Reformed Church remained essentially unchanged. While the Mother Church was to some extent involved, the chief responsibility for these problems lay with the West Indies Company. Not only was the Company directly responsible for the support and maintenance of the religious life of New Netherland, but indirectly its decisions affecting land tenure, trading regulations, wages and salaries, and extent of colonization were of vital importance to the Church.

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[20]Eekhof, Jonas Michaelius, p. 130. Letter to Rev. Adrian Smoutius. Original language (Dutch) version also given. The letter is also reproduced in Edward T. Corwin (ed.), Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York, 7 vols. (Albany: Published by the State under the supervision of Hugh Hastings, State Historian, 1901-1916), I, 49-68. Hereafter cited as ERNY.

The Netherlands had a population of some two million people. The fabled prosperity of its municipalities and the mild climate of tolerance[21] prompted few Dutchmen to leave their comfortable but crowded land for uncertain shores. But thousands of exiles and drifters from neighboring countries gathered in the teeming ports and cities: Walloons and Flemings--ardent Calvinists from the Southern Lowlands, French Huguenots, English Separatists, and Germans from many principalities. Cast up by religious wars, lured by the thriving economy, or seeking religious toleration, the lower classes of these aliens found only the least attractive and poorly paid occupations open to them. Those who had been farmers could obtain no land; indeed, the great impoldering activities in progress only pointed to the scarcity and high price of Dutch land. For these displaced working classes, both India Companies offered many forms of low-paying employment. As a result, New Netherland became a seventeenth century Babel, with Governor Kieft reporting eighteen languages heard near the fort in 1644. In the face of such a heterogeneous population, and with a continuous influx of Englishmen and Swedes, it was impossible to maintain religious uniformity and orthodoxy in the colony for long.

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[21]The only Dutch refugees from religious intolerance were the Arminians. They preferred to shelter in England, Sweden or a German state; none seem to have come to America during their brief exile (1619-1626).

While the Company poured men and money into the ephemeral conquest of Brazil and the futile development of Caribbean islands, New Netherland languished as a backwash of the elusive empire. A majority of the Directors, intent upon high profits and low overhead, settled for a policy of trade rather than of colonization in the Hudson area. A form of "salt-water civilization" resulted, with the Hudson River as an extension of the Atlantic. In the wilderness, at the head of navigation sat tiny Fort Orange in the heart of the fur country; one hundred fifty miles to the south at the mouth of this marine highway was the entrepot, New Amsterdam. Between these two points (and from still smaller posts on the Delaware and Connecticut) flowed the extractive riches of the forest; at these two points clustered a slender population. Not until 1642 was there a clergyman for each cluster, and not even then were both supported by the Company.

Faced with the mounting costs of maintaining this far-spread establishment, the colonizing faction of the Company won out over the trading faction, and introduced the patroon system of land grants in 1629, hoping both to evade greater financial responsibility and to stimulate immigration--while securing for themselves large grants of land. Under the Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions, granted by the Company and confirmed by the States General in 1630, five extensive grants along the Hudson were made, conferring

upon the holders feudal powers over the lives of their tenants, including matters of religion. Article XXVII insisted,

> The Patroons and colonists shall in particular, and in the speediest manner, endeavor to find out ways and means whereby they may support a Minister and Schoolmaster, that thus the service of God and zeal for religion may not grow cool and be neglected among them, and they shall, for the first, procure a Comforter of the Sick there.[22]

Under the patroon system, only old Killiaen Van Rensselaer brought out a minister, the Rev. Johannes Megapolensis, whose six-year contract was temporarily protested in Amsterdam, possibly because he had been reared a Catholic. At the end of his term Megapolensis was disinclined to stay longer in America, and sent his wife and family to Holland in anticipation of his own return. His authorization to leave became snarled by two difficulties which became typical during the colonial period--slowness of correspondence and the inability to find a replacement for him. As he was finally about to depart, the Company officials at New Amsterdam pressured him to stay on and fill the vacancy newly risen on Manhattan; otherwise, there would have been no clergymen left in the colony.[23]

The system of land tenure under the patroonships failed to attract any but the lowest class of settlers

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[22]ERNY, I, 75; 78.

[23]Megapolensis never returned to the Netherlands. His wife and family returned to America, and he served the church at New Amsterdam until his death in 1670.

because the land was not sold but leased; it could not be held in fee-simple.[24] However, the Company simultaneously made provision for individuals to own as much land elsewhere as they could cultivate. This served in the next decade to lure more settlers from Connecticut than from the Netherlands, and led to ethnic and religious frictions. Migration from the Netherlands did not greatly increase until after 1640 when the Company relinquished its commercial monopoly and modified its land and governing policies, thereby attracting a more aggressive type of settler. Even then, the Rev. John Backerus complained to the Classis from New Amsterdam in 1648:

> The congregation here numbers about one hundred and seventy members. Most of them are very ignorant in regard to true religion, and very much given to drink. To this they are led by the seventeen taphouses here. What bad fruits result therefrom, your Reverences will easily understand.[25]

The ministers generally received shabby treatment and scant support during the Dutch period of the colony. In sharp contrast to the declarations of the Church (or perhaps as a corollary) materialism dictated the national ethics of the period. Piet Heyn became a national hero in 1628 by striking a resounding blow at Spanish wealth and religion--twelve million guilders worth. Like its counterpart founded

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[24] ERNY, II, 1262; 1427.

[25] Ibid., I, 236. Backerus had contracted for four years, but was forced to stay seven; he reproached the Company for keeping him longer: "against my will and resolution and much to my disadvantage."

earlier, the West Indies Company was riddled with nepotism and corruption on all levels of officialdom. Between 1625 and 1647, the Directors miscast a succession of inept governors in a position which called for character and ability. Until Peter Stuyvesant appeared, his predecessors practiced their own doctrine of the two spheres--material and spiritual--without letting them overlap. It is greatly to the credit of several early clergymen that they denounced what they saw, and waged some celebrated verbal battles in which they usually were the losers. Unfortunately, a number of the preachers were not totally free from human failings themselves, and they justified the charges of arrogance, meddling, and an inordinate familiarity with the wine-glass.

All the governors were dictatorial, and all appear to have been incompetent with the exception of Stuyvesant, a Calvinist minister's son, who cancelled out his virtue by being strictly orthodox and religiously intolerant.[26] The collision between Church and Company (upon which the former was completely dependent) existed from the first. In

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[26]David M. Ellis, James A. Frost, Harold C. Syrett, and Harry J. Carman, A Short History of New York (Published in Cooperation with the New York State Historical Society; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1957), pp. 22-23. Also see John Webb Pratt, Religion, Politics and Diversity: The Church-State Theme in New York History (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 7. For reference to "a succession of pompous, incompetent, drunken directors" see R. W. G. Vail's review of Peter Stuyvesant and His New York by Henry H. Kessler and Eugene Rachlis, reprinted from New York Times Book Review (no data given) in Delta, Vol. II, Number 3 (Autumn, 1959), 93-94.

September of 1630, Rev. Michaelius wrote to a highly placed friend in North Holland:

> When I first landed here, the beginning of my work promised something great. I had a pretty large congregation in proportion to the place and the population, and the Church grew in numbers and piety. But see how this hope gradually vanished through a nefarious enterprise of wicked men.
>
> We have a governor [Minuit] who is most unworthy of his office: a slippery man, who under the treacherous mask of honesty is a compound of all iniquity and wickedness. For he is accustomed to the lies, of which he is full, and to the imprecations and most awful execrations; he is not free from fornication, the most cruel oppressor of the innocent and who deems no one worthy of his favor and protection who is not of the same kidney as he is. He has a council at his disposition that obeys with the same iniquity as he commands. . . . For besides cheating our Company whose servants they are, in unworthy ways to their own profit, and having an eye only to their own interest, they also oppress the innocent, and they live so to propagate wickedness.

When Michaelius denounced Minuit and his minions to the Directors in Amsterdam, he only brought more troubles upon himself. For, he continued,

> seeing that this man and his party, through the indulgence of the Lords [Directors], is getting bolder, and turns aside day by day more and more from the right way and brings me, as much as he can, into disfavour with the people, and excites sundry against me, and finally although he still occupies the office of an elder in the Church, nevertheless plots indefatigably to disperse all the fruit of my ministry and of my labours, I have renewed in all earnestness my complaint before the Directors of our Company. . . . urgently requesting that I might return to the Fatherland.[27]

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[27]Eekhof, Jonas Michaelius, pp. 67-69. Letter to Johannes de Foreest. In 1637 the Company requested nomination of another pastor for New Netherlands. Michaelius had applied through the Classis of Amsterdam for a second term but was coldly rejected by the Company Directors to the dismay of the Classis.

Minuit was recalled in 1631, and the founder of the Dutch Church in America followed him home to the Netherlands the next year.

For the next fourteen years, the fiery Reverend Everardus Bogardus was the only minister in New Netherland. Accompanied by the first schoolmaster sent to the colony, Bogardus arrived on the same ship bearing the new governor, the weak, colorless and corrupt Wouter Van Twiller, whose chief qualifications were that he had married the niece of Van Rensselaer and had twice visited New Netherland on cattle boats.[28] Although five stone warehouses decorated the skyline, there was still no church in the entire colony. Under Van Twiller the Company prospered, but Van Twiller prospered even more, while neglecting the welfare of the inhabitants. Dominie Bogardus denounced him publicly as a "child of the devil" and threatened the corpulent governor with a verbal lashing from the pulpit.[29] The governor managed to even up the indignities by chasing the minister with a drawn sword during one of his drunken rages. The new minister's unguarded tongue and quick temper led to complaints which reached Amsterdam, and his removal was considered. The Consistory request for his retention was

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[28]Edward Robb Ellis, The Epic of New York City (New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1966), p. 31. Before becoming governor, Van Twiller had been a clerk for five years in the Company warehouse in Amsterdam.

[29]ERNY, I, 196-197.

supported by the Council at New Amsterdam and he stayed on, although it appeared for a time, in 1635, as if he might be returned. In the end, it was Van Twiller who was replaced, leaving under charges of "illegal trading, incompetence and hostility toward the Reformed Church."

Rev. Bogardus wasted no time in aggravating the new governor, Willem Kieft (1638-1646), who was equally strong-minded. Both men, by their unseemly conduct and invective, brought discredit to their offices, and one of their spats involved the building of a church. The first services in the colony had been held in the loft of a horse-powered tan-bark mill. In the early years of Bogardus' ministry a crude barn-like structure was erected on Pearl Street. This was permitted to deteriorate quickly, and was a cause of shame to Dutchmen who had seen the neat New England churches. Kieft now proposed to raise a church that would be a credit to the community, but financed by the inhabitants themselves, thereby saving the Company the costs. He used the occasion of the marriage of the minister's daughter to circulate a subscription sheet among the wine-soaked guests and then refused to release them from their over-generous pledges which the morning light revealed.[30]

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[30]For further account of the wedding activities, see ERNY, I, 164 and 198; also in John Fiske, Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America (2 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1899), I, 212; Corwin, Manual, p. 258.

Other quarrels erupted over Kieft's murderous Indian policy, his dictatorial government, and his refusal to permit colonists to appeal to higher authorities in the Netherlands. When the immoderate Bogardus attacked the governor from the pulpit, countering the official's charges of drunkenness and of fomenting the malcontents, the populace became sadly divided. The governor's pew in the unfinished church stood empty on Sunday, and at his orders the troops, drilling within the fort compound in which the church was located, punctuated the services with drum-roll and cannon shot. Although the Company officials and servants sided with Kieft, most of the exasperated inhabitants supported the minister--the more because the funds for a school and for the unfinished church had been misappropriated to the bloody Indian war. Inside the church, Bogardus outthundered the cannon:

> What are the great men of this country but vessels of wrath and fountains of woe and trouble? They think of nothing but to plunder the property of others, to dismiss, to banish, to transport to Holland.[31]

When Kieft in desperation served Bogardus with legal proceedings and summoned him before the court, the minister refused to appear, denying the governor's authority. There the matter rested until Peter Stuyvesant appeared in May, 1647, in response to appeals of Bogardus and his supporters for the recall of Kieft. The irascible dominie resigned

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[31] Fiske, I, 228.

from his pastorate in order to return to Amsterdam to clear his name, as he had once before threatened to do under Van Twiller. Both the governor and the minister sailed on the "Princess," departing on August 16, 1647. Their case was removed to a higher court and postponed sine die, for both were drowned in shipwreck off the Welsh coast in September.

The Reformed Church at last found a firm supporter and champion of orthodoxy in Peter Stuyvesant, the last Dutch governor (1647-1664). His strong church sentiments, inherited from his Friesian pastor-father, were fed by his wife Judith Bayard, the granddaughter of a refugee Huguenot clergyman. Quickly, the church in the fort was completed, and he himself was elected one of the elders. He unhesitatingly combined spiritual and temporal authority to regulate the lives of the inhabitants. Drinking in the taverns during church services was forbidden and saloons were to close at nine o'clock. In 1648, he insisted that there should be afternoon as well as morning preaching which all were required to attend. After New Amsterdam was given municipal status, court sessions were opened with prayer.[32]

Stuyvesant was sent to rescue an economic venture that was already beyond saving. Efficient and honest, he was nevertheless an autocrat whose religious bigotry is well known. For a time he was able to undermine and silence his opposition, but complaints finally reached the States General

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[32] ERNY, I, 314.

which forced him to loosen his tight grip on the colony. New Netherland rapidly recovered from the ill effects of Kieft's Indian wars and this, together with favorable publicity in Europe, brought a new influx of settlers from all directions, only to raise new turmoil in the religious life of the colony. During Stuyvesant's regime, the newcomers included French Huguenots, Piedmontese Waldenses, Scot Presbyterians, English Independents, Moravians, Anabaptists and Jews.[33]

The exclusiveness of the Reformed Church in the colony had been established in 1629, and reiterated in 1640: "And no other Religion shall be publicly admitted in New Netherland except the Reformed, as it is at present preached and practiced by public authority in the United Netherlands . . . ."[34] The two legalist pastors, Megapolensis and Drisius, not only pressured the governor for strict enforcement but complained to the Classis of Amsterdam, asking them to request the Lords Directors to ban the Jews. Stuyvesant needed little prodding. The ensuing persecutions of Quakers, Baptists, and Lutherans, and finally the orders of the Directors to end this harassment are well known. Nevertheless, to the end of the Dutch occupation, no denomination except the Reformed was permitted to erect a house of worship.[35]

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[33]Fiske, II, 1267.

[34]ERNY, I, 130.

[35]Edward R. Ellis, p. 60.

Since about 1640, tiny villages with handfuls of families had sprung up along both sides of the Hudson, on upper Manhattan, and on Long Island. Too small and poor to support an ordained pastor, and with a declining Company unable to assume the responsibility, these villages had to splice the activities of a lay preacher and the rare visits of an ordained minister into some semblance of religious life. Until 1654, the poverty-stricken farmers on Long Island had to commute to New Amsterdam by small boat, traveling three or four hours to attend service, or await an infrequent pastoral visit by the same hazardous path. The four small congregations begun there finally were fortunate in securing by chance the services of a minister homeward bound to the Netherlands from Brazil, where the Dutch were being expelled. Esopus (Kingston), half-way up the Hudson, was organized in 1659; its first minister, arriving the next year, found a congregation of sixteen, which increased to sixty in the next three years.[36] And on the Delaware, a weak church was planted at New Amstel after it was taken from the Swedes.

These churches all looked to the West India Company, already far advanced into bankruptcy, to provide ministers and financial support. Requests not only for ministers, but also for building materials had to be approved at New

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[36] ERNY, I, 543.

Amsterdam by Governor and Council. To the villagers at Harlem, eleven miles north of New Amsterdam on Manhattan, Stuyvesant promised that when twenty-five families settled there he would provide them with a minister of their own.[37] At Midwout (Flatbush) on Long Island, the nearly completed church was hailed with thanks to Governor and Council, but some members thought the outside needed "a coat of color and oil, to make it last longer . . . these materials must necessarily be fetched from the Fatherland, and we request, that it be done upon your Honors' order and recommendation to the Honorable Company." The Council approved the request and forwarded it to the Directors in Amsterdam.[38] Nine months later the church was still "almost completed, except the windows," and the Governor was requested now to present the church with one or two windows. Accompanying the request was an itemized statement of expenses. The note of the Council ignored the request and made the significant comment: "When the treasury is in funds four hundred guilders shall be advanced to the petitioners on behalf of the Company for completing the work."[39]

Although the colonial churches, through their pastors, corresponded with the Classis as often as the vagaries of wind and tide permitted, the Company Directors

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[37]Edward R. Ellis, p. 52.

[38]<u>ERNY</u>, I, 461.

[39]<u>Ibid</u>., 484-485.

complained about receiving few letters from them, and insisted on reading those received by the Classis. This created endless possibilities for embarrassment to both parties, for the correspondence was often freighted with criticism of the Governors and Directors, who, being paramount, did not hesitate to interfere with the internal affairs of the Church in the interests of a smoother commercial operation. The following instructions from the Classis to the church at New Amsterdam attest to this tension as late as 1660:

> It was further added by their Honors that they would gladly see some moderation and laxity allowed on your part, in certain phrases, in the Formula of Baptism, etc. This, in their Honors' opinion, might be productive of much good in your locality. But we defended you before their Honors with all our might, in accordance with the explanations you make, against the alledged false accusations of the Lutherans; and as in respect to the alterations in the words of the usual form of Baptism, you have expressed your determination to consult our Rev. Classis; so we consider that you have, for weighty reasons, properly held yourselves to it hitherto; and it has been thought advisable earnestly to admonish you not to depart from the usual Forms. Finally, their Honors expressed dissatisfaction at the infrequent correspondence of the church in New Netherland with their Honors. They strongly insisted on reading your letters sent to us. These were therefore handed over to their Honors . . . Our meeting has also agreed to recommend you to correspond more frequently with their Honors . . . This will be useful, as then we will not be compelled, as previously, to hand over to their Honors, your letters addressed to us.[40]

The foregoing pages describe something, at least, of the Church relationships with the Company and its officials, seated both in Old and New Amsterdam. It should be obvious

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[40] *Ibid.*, 471.

that the Church was completely dependent upon the Company for its material support; it is equally clear that the Company, engrossed elsewhere, gave niggardly and halting assistance, and that its officials, with the exception of Stuyvesant, ignored the Church in pursuing their own or the Company's ends. But the Company was only one part in the equation.

The question must also be answered: "How did the Reformed Church in the Netherlands provide for its offspring?" The churches so slowly developing in America were as fully dependent upon the Mother Church for spiritual support as they were upon the Company for the material. The task of furnishing ministers, teachers and lay-preachers to the Company for its settlements devolved upon the Classis of Amsterdam. When a minister was needed, either to replace one who had served out his contract or to serve a new church, the request might proceed from the Governor to the Directors to the Classis, or the pastor himself might notify the Classis which would then inform the Company through a committee. Although the Company was eliminated in 1664 as a part of the process, the Classis maintained its role in finding and supplying clergymen until the American Revolution, despite heavy opposition from 1720 onward, in America. This gave it a "quality check" on the American clergy, and, of course, strengthened its disciplinary power.

It is hardly amazing that Michaelius acknowledged this dependency soon after his arrival in 1628:

> If . . . you . . . who have special superintendence over us here deem it necessary to use any correction, instruction or good advice, it will be agreeable to us and we shall thank your Reverence therefor.[41]

But the direction and guidance so gratefully accepted during the long period of hardship and frustration established a habit of dependency upon Amsterdam for supervision and control which, during more favorable times, hardened into a "solemn duty."[42] Contributing most to this situation was colonial reliance upon the Classis for pastoral supply, and this gradually deepened into the belief, among American clergy and church members, that the only source of legitimate ministerial authority lay with the Classis of Amsterdam. The surprising fact is that the Classis for so long accepted and strove to discharge this troublesome responsibility. And although pulpit vacancies in America eventually brought in an occasional minister ordained in other Dutch Classes or even a German Classis, the right of Amsterdam to nominate and ordain remained unchallenged during the Dutch period, and unimpaired until 1737, being completely renounced only with the independence of the Church in 1791-1792.

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[41] J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Narratives of New Netherland (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), p. 125.

[42] Alexander Gunn, Memoirs of the Rev. John H. Livingston (New York: Rutgers Press, 1829), p. 83.

Even apart from the needs in the new world, the Netherlands Church had difficulty in supplying the home congregations with pastors trained according to the regulations established at Dordrecht. The demand exceeded the number available. At the start of the revolt against Spain in 1566, every city that attached itself to the Prince of Orange had to establish a Reformed church and schools with religious instruction.[43] With the triumph of Calvinism in the northern provinces it is estimated that only between five and ten per cent of the Catholic priests were proselytes;[44] the great majority fled or were expelled. It proved far easier to take over the Catholic buildings than to fill them with trained clergymen, although some arrived from Switzerland.

The first Dutch university had been founded at Leiden in 1575, in part to provide Reformed clergymen.[45] The Universities of Groningen and Utrecht were not established until 1614 and 1636 respectively. As a result, the expansion of the number of clergymen did not keep pace with the rapid acquisition of a vast overseas empire or the needs at home. In 1600 there were six hundred forty-one clergymen; in 1625, one thousand sixty-one; and at mid-century one thousand three hundred eighty-five. By the latter date

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[43] Jan and Annie Romein, p. 345.

[44] Boxer, p. 117.

[45] Jan and Annie Romein, p. 383.

the large majority of these clergymen were probably university trained.

As the Dutch empire expanded, the Reformed Church had to supply trained clergymen for the permanent stations of the East Indies Company. However, lay preachers were used at the lesser trading stations and on the Company ships during the long voyages. These requirements increased the Church's task greatly, even without consideration for the time expended on correspondence and attention to detail.[46] Establishment of the West Indies Company escalated the demands upon the Church, whose responsibilities were extended to the western hemisphere. A further strain resulted at the beginning of the first Anglo-Dutch War when lay preachers were required on the warships of the United Provinces.[47] Brazil, as a focal point of the West Indies Company's objectives, received priority over the settlements in North America and the Caribbean. Even at the beginning of the Portuguese re-conquest in 1645, when some clergymen were withdrawn, nine ordained ministers were still serving there, along with an unknown number of lay preachers.[48]

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[46]For example, "Regulations drawn up by the Deputies relating to the Colonial Churches of the East and West Indies and adopted by the Classis," in ERNY, I, 89-91.

[47]Actually this requirement dated from much earlier. See "Form of Instruction for Preachers on Men-of-War," dated June 7, 1636, in ERNY, I, 105-106.

[48]ERNY, I, 193. Earlier in the year the Church in Brazil had requested seven trained ministers and more lay

At the same time, there was only one pastor (Bogardus) supported by the Company in New Netherland, although another was serving the patroon, Van Rensselaer, who had the right of advowson on his grant. Tales of hardship, fear of the ocean passage, the outbreak of European war, and low salaries caused difficulties in ministerial recruiting. Occasionally a pastor, waiting impatiently for his term of service to end, wrote from America charging the Company or the patroon with evading the contract provisions or even with misrepresenting conditions in the new world in order to attract applicants.[49] The Rev. John Backerus, on his way "home" via New York after serving the Company in Curacao, was prevailed upon to fill the pulpit of Bogardus while the latter went to the Netherlands to clear his name. When Bogardus drowned, Backerus was left stranded in America; he sent letter after letter to the Classis, asking for a replacement so he could be released:

> . . . partly, because as matters stand here, I find it impossible to live in comfort with my family in this place with the meagre addition of two hundred florins for board money; for I require for my table and clothing all my monthly pay besides; partly because I do not wish to remain longer, even if I receive enough more that I could live upon it; but I wish to be

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preachers from the Netherlands. The Classis of Amsterdam supplied seven of the nine there, plus one each in New Amsterdam, Curacoa, and Loando (Africa). Three other Classes supplied one minister each for this area.

[49] *Ibid.*, 238.

> transferred from here to a place in Holland, wherever the Lord may please to call me.[50]

Even the New Amsterdam Consistory sent a long letter in his behalf, approving his dismissal, with the hopeful request "that an old, experienced, and godly minister might be sent to them, lest their congregation, already in great confusion . . . should dwindle away altogether."[51] But in Amsterdam, meeting after meeting closed with the statement: "Each of the brethren was again requested to look around earnestly for qualified preachers to be sent to New Netherland," in addition to half a dozen other places.

Repeatedly, ministers whose names were submitted failed even to reply or report in answer to a summons from the Classis. Reports of the bloody Indian wars of the 1640's hardly conduced to lure them from "Patria." In April, 1652, the Rev. John Episcopius, at the urging of his friends, personally appeared before the Classis and asked to be excused from filling the pastorate at Rensselaerswyck, "in view of the dubious affairs" between England and the Netherlands.[52] It was not that ministers were well-paid or enjoyed a favored social position in the Netherlands. There are many accounts of ministers there who could not make do

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[50] Ibid., 235. Backerus arrived in New Amsterdam in January, 1648.

[51] Ibid., 247.

[52] Ibid., 308. "Episcopius referred to the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654) then in progress."

on their salary of five or six hundred guilders, who took to practicing medicine as a sideline, or whose wives took in lodgers, sold goods from door to door, and even brewed beer to supplement meagre incomes in an affluent society.[53] But prices in New Netherland were reported as four times those in Amsterdam. When the Company sought a replacement in 1654, it offered only six hundred guilders, which even the Classis thought should be doubled.

As the Company sank into bankruptcy, the salaries of ministers, teachers and visitors of the sick fell into arrears sometimes taking years to collect, and leading to many and repeated complaints to the Classis. Inevitably, men who were poorly qualified or who had fallen out of good-standing filled some of the colonial appointments, because ordained and learned pastors were little inclined to leave settled positions for the rigors of an uncivilized land. The Church tried to advertise these positions, and some were filled with clerical refugees from Brazil, such as Polhemius. But the fact remains that with the exception of Michaelius, all the early colonial ministers in New Netherland were subject to questions of character or ministerial qualifications.

The problem of supply was never overcome, although Dominies Megapolensis and Drisius, colleagues at New Amsterdam, advanced a reasonable suggestion in 1658:

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[53]Jan and Annie Romein, pp. 371-372.

> It appears to us that it would be very advantageous to the Dutch Church to send over good Dutch ministers who might be temporarily placed in the smaller Dutch towns, and afterward on the death or disability of other Dutch ministers, to be transferred to the more populous towns. And such transfers would very soon be required, as Domine Schaats is a man in feeble health; Dom. Polhemius is already sixty years old, and both of us have entered in our fifty-seventh year.[54]

In 1660, two young ministers, Henricus Selyns and Hermanus Blom, arrived, increasing the force by one-third; the former had to hold his Breukelen services in a barn, while the latter went up to Esopus where he had "lots of everything except parishoners."

In 1662, with but six ministers in the whole colony, Dominie Polhemius, now sixty-four years old, wrote what sounded like a valedictory although he had fourteen years more of life and labor. Addressed to the Classis of Amsterdam, his letter is especially interesting because he perceived the need for some unitive force for the few and dispersed clergymen.

> . . . I still continue in the service of the ministry in the church here, and as I hope, to the satisfaction of pious souls. In relation to the general state of the church, which by the blessing of God, is constantly increasing, I will only say that we stand in need of communication with one another in the form of a Classis, after the manner of the Fatherland. It is desirable that this be begun, although I do not know of much business to be transacted. We also live a considerable distance from one another. I myself, on account of the advanced period of my ministry, and my infirmities, have but little personal interest in the matter, but

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[54] ERNY, I, 349-350.

> ought rather to hold myself in constant preparation for the grave and for eternal blessedness.[55]

This was the first uncertain call for organization and authority for the American churches, faintly expressing a wish that would be fully achieved only after another one hundred thirty years.

Despite Polhemius' prophetic call for an American Classis, all problems of doctrine and discipline arising in the colony invariably had to be referred to Amsterdam for settlement because no person had authority--and no organization existed--to deal with such matters. Great distance, irregular sailings, and the vagaries of wind and weather prevented an easy trans-Atlantic intercourse, and colonial problems were long delayed in their settlement. If questions arose over the authority of a lay-preacher, the baptism of Negro slaves or Indians, the excommunication of a Company official, or the scandal of a morals case involving the daughter of the minister at Albany, it might take years to settle them. The Classis wrote to the Consistory at New Amsterdam in May, 1656: " . . . no letters from you have come to hand since your last, under date of October 6, 1653."[56]

Under conditions where distance compounded even the smallest misunderstanding, it is possible to appreciate the

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[55] Ibid., 525-526.

[56] Ibid., 348. This was the result of the first Anglo-Dutch War.

Church's insistence upon strict adherence to rules and regulations, although it blighted the growth of independence. When the Rev. Johannes Megapolensis prepared a catechism for use in New Amsterdam (1656), he submitted it to the Classis for approval before it was printed. Permission was refused in these words:

> . . . although the diligence of his Reverence is to be commended, yet that it is inadvisable to permit the printing, much more the introduction of the same for the instruction of youth. Such a course would war against the general order and usage of our church, both in this country and in distant churches no other catechisms besides the Heidelberg and the Compendium of the same . . . is [sic] in use.
>
> Dear Brethren, the general Formula, the doctrines which are good, tried, and established by long practice, to which old and young have everywhere become accustomed, and which have been used with much edification, should not be lightly changed. . . . We leave it to your own forecast to decide whether other churches, should such a practice be permitted, would not likewise assume the same liberty, and not only use other catechisms, but different ones at different times in the same place? Neither would this liberty be limited to this one matter of the Catechism. It would also extend to other matters, either of similar or of a different nature. Out of this, what sad disputes, schism, and all manner of confusions would arise. Beloved, let us ever maintain unity, not only in the doctrine of truth, but also in the Formula of the same, as well as in those things which pertain to Order.[57]

Thus was foreshadowed the long period of dictation from Amsterdam in every least thing, in an effort to control the purity of religion and maintain the formal Liturgy in a frontier environment.

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[57] *Ibid.*, 349-350.

As the period of Dutch control in New Netherland neared its end in 1664, the colony had a population of not more than seven thousand "purely Dutch." These inhabitants, widely dispersed between the Delaware and Connecticut Rivers, occupied three towns and some thirty villages, or lived on isolated farms. Most of them clustered near the port city or along the Hudson. It is estimated that not more than two-thirds of the population were Dutch, with the English easily the next largest national group.[58] Although precise figures are lacking, it is probable that the Dutch churches had between one and two thousand members, in various stages of grace ranging from active to inert.

During this formative period, the Church on both sides of the Atlantic had sought as close a relationship as possible, with the American Church in complete subordination. The meagre results of this collaboration were due largely to the weakness of Company interest and support. They appear all the more disappointing when measured against the accomplishments of their fellow Calvinists in New England. Whatever the comparisons to be made on the basis of formal Calvinistic theology, in practice the commercial environment, the heterogeneous population, the presence of

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[58]David M. Ellis, et al., p. 21. The total population of the colony at the surrender is most often quoted at ten thousand. However, the figures met with vary considerably. Reynolds and Wertenbaker accept eight thousand; Sweet gives seven thousand. Jan and Annie Romein say ten thousand is "a gross exaggeration."

so few clergymen, and the determination to enjoy life even if one had to move toward some pre-destined end--all were conducive to responses quite different from those in early Puritan New England. The Dutch continued to celebrate religious holidays they carried over from the Catholic Church. The settlers, often rough and boisterous, became notorious for their drinking habits.

The Dutch control of New Netherland lasted through four decades. In that time, fifteen ministers were dispatched to serve the colonial churches, which at the English conquest numbered eleven, with one or two "preaching stations" in addition. The problem of maintaining continuity of religious life in the colony was a difficult one. Only five of the ministers died in America; eight returned to the Netherlands, one removed to Virginia, and one drowned on the outward journey. When the English arrived, the Dutch Church was at its strongest, which is not saying a great deal: there were six active pastors.

Throughout this period, the Dutch Church in America remained a European institution, completely dominated by clergymen, liturgy, church order and language emanating from Amsterdam. Even their church architecture, after the first crude provisions, reflected this orientation. The church which rose in the fort (1642-47) was the only attempt to reproduce a pre-Reformation type church. Netherlands church architecture reflected the decision to break cleanly with

Rome; emphasis was to be on preaching, rather than the mass. Experiments with six and eight-sided churches dotted the larger Dutch cities, and these forms were now carried to America. Killiaen Van Rensselaer gave the idea much thought, and even constructed an eight-sided model which he sent over; eventually at least six of the octagonal and two of the hexagonal churches were built. As English influence increasingly penetrated from New England to Long Island, the oblong structure replaced the other types.[59]

At the end of August, 1664, Peter Stuyvesant was forced to surrender New Netherland to a small squadron of black-hulled English ships. With a minister's restraining hand on his shoulder, the Governor reluctantly gave the order ending the authority of the States General and West Indies Company. Henceforth the political and economic ties to the Netherlands were severed, and the fate of the religious ties with the mother country became uncertain.

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[59]Norman J. Kansfield, "A Tradition of Transition; A Study of the Architecture of the Five Church Buildings of the Collegiate Church of New York City During the Colonial Period." An unpublished paper submitted to the Department of Church History, Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan, February, 1965. I was permitted to examine this paper through the courtesy of Prof. Donald J. Bruggink.

CHAPTER II

THE COLONIAL CHURCH IN NEW YORK, 1664-1720

POLITICAL PRESSURE AND ECCLESIASTICAL LOYALTY

Among the Dutch commissioners who negotiated the surrender terms was the Rev. Samuel Megapolensis, and he is usually credited with the articles protecting the interests of the Dutch Church.[1] Article 2 of the agreement provided for the continued use of the church in the fort, while the eighth declared: "The Dutch here shall enjoy the liberty of their consciences in Divine Worship and church discipline."[2] These terms appeared to give liberal assurances to the inhabitants for the continued existence of their Church; but before the expedition was mounted, Governor Nicolls had received secret instructions from the Duke of York which would have made the Dutch commissioners uneasy. Although it would be highly desirable if all were of "one faith" and one way of worship with the English, Nicolls had

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[1] C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 423.

[2] ERNY, I, 557-558. The Treaty of Breda (21 July 1667) at the end of the Second Anglo-Dutch War (Dec. 1664-July 1667) confirmed the English possession of New York.

been instructed, "You should proceed very warily and not enter upon it, till you have made some progress in your less difficult business. . . . "[3]

The tall, quiet, Dutch-speaking Nicolls, faced with an overwhelmingly Dutch population, had little option but to observe these strictures, and he was very popular during his four-year administration. His successor, Francis Lovelace, was also extremely conciliatory in religious matters; but thereafter, beginning with Edmund Andros in 1674, the English applied with increasing pressure an Anglicizing policy which reached its culmination twenty-five years later. While Anglicization is not to be confused with Americanization, it was intended to alienate the Dutch from their remaining link with the Netherlands, and consequently an important step in the evolution of an American Church.

The conquest was felt by the Church in several ways. Not only was the overriding jurisdiction of the national States General ended, but the political control and the economic support of the Dutch West Indies Company terminated abruptly. Furthermore, the authority of the Classis of Amsterdam, although it was to continue, was left without any legal sanction. Having enjoyed an established position for forty years, the American churches were suddenly plunged into uncertainty and would shortly become merely one denomination among many, with worse to follow. Considered

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[3] Ibid., 544-545.

neither Anglican nor Dissenting, they would eventually be caught in the long cross-fire between the two.

Church membership declined over the next decade, as many of the Dutch inhabitants refused to live under an English government. Some left the proximity of New York City, moving to the periphery of British control, up the Hudson. Many crossed the river to New Jersey, where the full freedom of religious practice guaranteed by "The Concessions and Agreement of the Lords Proprietors" continued unimpaired and without an established church throughout the colonial period, steadily attracting immigrants of all religious denominations.[4] Two shiploads sailed to South Carolina, while others returned to the Netherlands, or, like Stuyvesant's son Balthazar, found refuge in the Dutch West Indies.[5] Nevertheless, the general exodus, which Rev. Schaats at Albany expected to follow English changes in policy, did not materialize.[6]

The ambivalence of the Dutch position was emphasized at one o'clock on the afternoon of October 14, 1664, when they dutifully assembled before the City Hall to take the oath of allegiance to their new government. The three

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[4]Julian P. Boyd, ed., Fundamental Laws and Constitutions of New Jersey, Vol. 17 of the New Jersey Historical Series (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), pp. 54-55.

[5]Edward R. Ellis, p. 74.

[6]ERNY, I, 587.

ministers serving the city, along with ex-Governor Stuyvesant and his secretary, absented themselves, fearing that the oath-taking was a trick to cancel the rights guaranteed in the surrender terms. Nicolls ordered the absentees to be summoned, and when the oath was read, a week of wrangling was precipitated by the Dutch demand for the addition of the words "Conformable to the Articles concluded on the surrender of this place." The Governor's assurances prevailed upon about 250 inhabitants to take the oath between October 21 and 26, and among the signers were four Dutch ministers (Megapolensis, father and son, Drisius and Luyck).[7] However, this problem remained unsettled down to the Revolution, as some ministers continued to ask themselves whether they could swear allegiance to the King of England (praying for the health of the royal family) and still retain their position in the established Church of the Netherlands.

In February of 1665, Governor Nicolls promulgated the code known as "The Duke's Laws," and these were accepted by representatives of the towns on March 11. The religious provisions required that a church capable of holding 200 persons be built in every parish, and in each such unit eight overseers were to be chosen, these to be

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[7]The Rev. Aegidius Luyck appears to have been an ordained minister who served as principal of the Latin Grammar School established in New Amsterdam in 1652. He was included with the other clergymen listed in ERNY, I, 565.

responsible for the "making and proportioning the levies and assessments for building and repairing the churches, provision for the poor, maintenance for the minister," and to manage parochial affairs, generally. Since no denomination was mentioned, and the Dutch were numerically superior in most areas, they fared as well as, or better than, other denominations. In fact, it meant a sort of limited and local re-establishment of the Dutch Church. However, as the governors were reluctant to force the non-Dutch population to pay taxes for the support of the Reformed Church, each congregation had to rely increasingly upon free will offerings.[8]

"To prevent scandalous and ignorant pretenders to the ministry from intruding themselves," no minister could officiate without credentials from the governor, showing that he had been properly ordained by some English bishop or minister or (to safeguard Dutch Reformed rights), had been ordained "in the dominions of any foreign prince of the Reformed religion."[9] At first applicable only to Long and Staten Islands, the Duke's Laws were extended to Esopus (Kingston) in 1673, and to the whole province in 1674. This latter period also marked a clarification of the surrender terms of 1664-1665, confirming the governor's power "without the General Assembly," to appoint the ministers and preachers

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[8]David M. Ellis, et al., p. 63.

[9]ERNY, I, 571.

chosen in the parishes, to establish their maintenance, and to authorize any persons or groups to keep and maintain what ministers they pleased. (This was renewed in 1674, when the English resumed control over the colony which they had briefly lost in the Third Anglo-Dutch War.)

Immediately after the first conquest, at least five of the not more than seven Dutch ministers expressed a wish to remove to the Netherlands, and by the start of 1670 death and repatriation had reduced their number to three old men, aged sixty-two, seventy, and seventy-two. Overwork and poverty almost cancelled out the Dutch Reformed Church at this point as the trio received no additions for a decade. The best instruction the Classis of Amsterdam could give Megapolensis and Drisius at New York City was to stay on and "oppose the introduction of the English Liturgy into our Church, as much as possible."[10] Their letters to the Classis were woeful recitals; all worried about the arrearages owed them by the West Indies Company, and they received their local salaries in beaver-skins, red and black wampum, or bushels (schepels) of wheat. In 1667, Old Gideon Schaats complained from Albany:

> Through changes made by the English, our salary has not only been diminished by two hundred guilders, but they have also for some time past taken charge of the excise, out of which we were formerly paid with great regularity; while now the salary is made by collections from house to house in the congregation. But the people are mostly needy themselves by the

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[10] Ibid., 575.

failure of trade. Therefore my pay is not only not forthcoming, but what is given, is proffered in wampum, or grain, which, before I receive it, costs twenty five guilders, but for which I have to pay the merchants thirty-five and often forty guilders, in wampum, for five bushels.[11]

In New York City, the Churchmasters refused a request to fence the graveyard because they were without income to pay even the smallest debts.[12] Just before his return to the Netherlands in 1668, Rev. Samuel Megapolensis wrote a very revealing letter:

> Shortly after the transfer of New Netherland I forwarded some letters to you, in which I wrote that I then hoped that things were going to better themselves, generally, with us; but time has brought us a different experience. . . . We have frequently hitherto complained to our ruler in relation to our small salaries. They do not reach more than five hundred guilders at most, while the expense of clothes, etc., is as great here as in the Fatherland. And even this small amount is irregularly paid, not at the appointed time, but little by little, and that in the uncurrent money of this country. Hence much of it is lost when taken up by the merchants. . . . The manner also in which the above mentioned sum is collected is unpleasant and degrading, and altogether unusual in our Dutch nation. They go around from house to house to collect the salary, and you may imagine the slights and murmurings occasioned thereby concerning the ministry and the ministers. . . . The labours of the ministry are now much more burdensome then they ever were before under the Dutch government; for there are now five separate places in which we must render services. Some of these are as much as three miles distant (nine English miles). . . . I have not the resolution to continue here longer. . . . In reference to the church, and ecclesiastical matters generally in this country . . . , little that is good can be said. . . . It appears as if

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[11] Ibid., 587.

[12] Ibid., 577. The Churchmasters were a four-man committee chosen by the Consistory to keep church property in good repair. (See ERNY, II, 1218.)

> God were punishing this land for its sins. Some years (ago) there appeared a meteor in the air. Last year we saw a terrible comet in the west, a little above the horizon, with the tail upward, and hanging over this place. It showed itself for about eight days, and then disappeared. So we fear God's judgments, but supplicate his favor.[13]

Although the Dutch greatly outnumbered their captors, they were unable to advance their position because they were without direction in the transition, and without leaders except for a few decrepit clergymen. Nicolls and his successor, Lovelace, accorded the Reformed Church fair treatment; the former even ordered the city authorities to levy a tax to pay arrears of the Dutch ministers in 1665, while five years later Lovelace, seeing the weakness of the Church in the City, guaranteed a yearly salary of one thousand guilders together with a free house and firewood for any Dutch minister who could come from Holland to assist the aged pastors.[14] When this offer was announced in Amsterdam, it met with no response for almost a year. Temporarily abandoned by the Netherlands Church, conditions only worsened in New York. The elder Megapolensis wrote plaintively:

> People crowd into the church and apparently like the sermon, but most of the listeners are not inclined to contribute to the support of the church and the salary of the preacher. They seem to desire we should live on air. . . . We have several times spoken to the Governor but he answers that if the Dutch will have

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[13] Ibid., 595-597.

[14] Ibid., 615.

> divine services their own way, then let them also take care of and support their own preachers. . . . Domine Drisius and I are old men, of nearly the same age. Time must show how it will turn out with us; meanwhile we shall do our duty and attend to our service. I trust that God, who has hitherto taken care of me from my youth, . . . will also henceforth take care of me during the short remainder of my life. . . . But a thought often occurs to me, and troubles me. It is, What will become of the congregation here, when I and Domine Drisius are dead. Since they care so little for a decent support of their preacher, I cannot see how they will procure another.[15]

In 1671, finally, the Rev. John Van Nieuwenhuysen accepted the Lovelace offer; this first ministerial recruit from the Netherlands since the English conquest served in the City until his death in 1682.

While the feeble Church in America continued to look to the Classis of Amsterdam for direction, that body momentarily faltered due to its uncertainty of conditions. The Rev. Drisius had forwarded a prickly problem from New York in 1669: if a person sleeps with his deceased wife's half-sister and afterwards marries her, (1) would that marriage be lawful, and (2) would that person be permitted to take communion? Drisius, perceiving the implication of civil jurisdiction, did not send the question directly to the Classis but rather to the Rev. Henricus Selyns, his predecessor in New York, to present to the Classis. It declined to consider the case, pleading a lack of jurisdiction.

> Inasmuch as the condition of that country is changed, not being under the same (political) constitution, as

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[15] *Ibid.*, 601-602.

> formerly, the Assembly excuses itself from replying to this question, nomine Classis; but will be glad if Rev. Selyns would write in answer thereto, as a private individual.[16]

The Dutch Church was like a small boat adrift, its fore line to the Company cast free, its aft line to the Classis trailing loosely in the water, and with a few weak hands to man the oars.

Temporary re-possession of New York by the Dutch in 1673-74 as a result of the third Anglo-Dutch War did not in any way help the condition of the Church, although the War revealed a continuing attachment to the Netherlands, as some inhabitants spiked the guns while others rowed out to the Dutch fleet to report the weakness of the fort.[17] After fifteen months, the colony was restored to England by the Treaty of Westminster. Rev. Van Nieuwenhuysen wrote to the Classis in 1674: "We greatly rejoice in the treaty of peace, but we should have still more greatly rejoiced, if this country had not been restored to the crown (of England)."[18]

The conciliatory attitude of the first English governors evaporated with the arrival of Governor Andros, who assumed control on November 10, 1674. Although he spoke

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[16] Ibid., 603. If this was a bona fide case, there is no record.

[17] Edward R. Ellis, p. 83. Control of New Netherlands not restored to Dutch West Indies Co., but retained by Dutch Government itself, which appointed a governor.

[18] ERNY, I, 653.

Dutch fluently, and, in the conditions of surrender, promised the Dutch "the usuall Discipline of their Church to be continued to them as formerly,"[19] he was unsympathetic to the Dutch and began a systemic attack on their culture--especially in areas of religion and education. The public school system inaugurated by the Dutch, so vital to the maintenance of religion and language, began to wither away; and the new regime did little to promote education and never established free schools, although various churches created primary and secondary schools, and a Latin Free School was later created by law, in 1704.[20]

Several months before the arrival of Andros, Dominie Van Nieuwenhuysen had informed the Classis that " . . . during the last four weeks, in apprehension of a change of governors, certain of our members have moved away . . . ," and he reported that the city church still consisted of between four and five hundred members.[21] Undoubtedly, Andros' dislike for the Dutch grew out of the hostility which the Dutch minister at New York City, Van Nieuwenhuysen, displayed toward the Lutheran pastor.[22]

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[19] Ibid., 662. For Commission and Instructions to Andros, see ERNY, 648-49; for negotiations between Andros and Colve (the Dutch Governor) confirming title of Reformed Consistory to church in the fort, see 649-50.

[20] Ibid., III, 1552.

[21] Ibid., I, 653-654.

[22] Ibid., 89-90. As late as 1678, the Lutheran and Dutch clergy had not spoken to each other for six years, and

Although some friction had already arisen over the performance of baptism and marriage ceremonies,[23] a significant test of civil authority over ecclesiastical jurisdiction occurred early in Andros' administration, and marks the first attempt to undermine the position of the Reformed Church in the colony. As the result of a personal request from Andros' patron, the Duke of York, the Rev. Nicholaus Van Rensselaer (son of the patroon) was appointed pastor at Albany to assist the aging Schaats. But Van Rensselaer was an Anglican. He had been ordained by the Bishop of Salisbury although licensed by the Classis of Amsterdam. The Consistory of the Albany church, assisted by Rev. Van Nieuwenhuysen who came up from New York City, successfully resisted the Governor's appointee until he agreed to submit to the Classis of Amsterdam, although they in turn were forced to compromise by recognizing the ordination of the Church of England.

Later, when Van Rensselaer attempted to baptize children in New York City, outside his area of authority, he was again resisted successfully, which angered Andros. Van Nieuwenhuysen was called before the Council to answer

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one Anglican clergyman, Chas. Wolley finally brought them together in his home over a bottle of wine, forced them both to speak in Latin, on pain of a penalty of a bottle of Madeira if they lapsed into Dutch. The wine loosened the tongue of the Reformed dominie, and the earlier enemies were soon "chattering in Latin so rapidly" that the Anglican could not follow. (E. R. Ellis, pp. 89-90.)

[23] ERNY, I, 654-655, 668.

"slanderous charges" lodged by Van Rensselaer with the governor. Van Nieuwenhuysen reported to the Classis of Amsterdam:

> I was publicly asked if the Church of England or the Bishop of Salisbury had not authority to ordain a minister for our Dutch church. Whereupon I persistently declared that I could not and would not acknowledge any Episcopal government over the church committed to my care. I placed myself for vindication, upon the Church Order of the Netherlands, and referred to my instructions received from your Rev. Body. . . . I felt that if my plea was not sustained, my ministry would de facto cease. . . . I doubt not that my defence of the freedom of the Dutch Church will prove acceptable to your Rev. Body. . . .[24]

This stand was more than vindicated when Governor Andros was forced to remove Van Rensselaer in 1676 for his "bad and offensive life."[25]

Under the governor's pressure, the Dutch tended to withdraw behind the shelter of their nationalism as represented by religion and language. Without Dutch civil authorities or Company officials to lead them, they turned to their dominies and to the ready-made cadres of their dozen churches as they strove to maintain the civil and religious guarantees which the English had given. "The struggle for civil freedom developed earlier than the struggle for ecclesiastical freedom, but both had their origin under the

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[24] Ibid., 685. See also 652 for Duke's favoritism, and 677ff. for remainder of account.

[25] Ibid., 702, for an account of Van Rensselaer's removal.

first Governor of the restored British authority."[26]

The ordination controversy contained a special significance because of the division which it caused in the Dutch Church. An aristocratic group of opportunists emerged who were willing to compromise with the English administration and Church. For the first time there was reference to an "English Party" among the Dutch.[27] Undoubtedly these appeasers considered themselves realists, but their opponents looked on them as renegades. "Our Church will never be free of English politics," lamented the Rev. Casparus Van Zuuren.[28] The lower social and economic elements among the Dutch continued to support their pastors and were unwilling to make concessions.

Hardly had this issue been settled when an even greater collision exploded between the governor and the Dutch Church. To serve the twelve churches there were only three clergymen, in 1676. However, Esopus had been aided for a few months by Peter Tesschenmaker, graduate in divinity from Utrecht, who had been licensed but not ordained. The communicants, English and Dutch alike were pleased with his ministry after having been without a pastor for nearly a decade. They petitioned Andros to "find" them a minister,

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[26] C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 28.

[27] ERNY, II, 792-793; Fiske, II, 89; Willard D. Brown, History of the Reformed Church in America (New York: Board of Publication and Bible School Work, 1928), p. 49.

[28] ERNY, II, 776.

evidently expecting Andros to circumvent the journey to Amsterdam by devising some means of American ordination. This situation contained dangerous implications both for governor and Church, and Andros ignored their request, perhaps remembering the Albany situation just smoothed over. For the Church it might well have set a precedent of civil control and administrative appointment of clergymen.

Tesschenmaker left Esopus, served for two years in Guiana, and then returned to the province, first at Esopus and then at New Castle, Delaware, where the pastor had just died. The inhabitants petitioned Andros for a minister, asking for Tesschenmaker, and this time on September 30, 1679, the Governor ordered Van Nieuwenhuysen "or any three or more of the ministers or pastors within this government"[29] to examine the new man, and ordain him if they found him qualified. In the unprecedented action which followed, the Dutch ministers (now increased to four) met in the house of Van Nieuwenhuysen in New York, formed themselves into a sort of American Classis, and proceeded to examine and ordain Tesschenmaker, according to the Church Rules and Forms. The four ministers carefully explained their action in a lengthy letter to Amsterdam,[30] and the proceedings of this "first ecclesiastical body" in America, convened at the call of an Episcopal governor, were confirmed by the Classis. With

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[29] Ibid., I, 724-726.

[30] Ibid., 730-733. Also see 733-735.

just a tinge of reservation in their reply, the Classis resolved:

> . . . that this assembly is pleased to be satisfied with their labors in this particular instance, and give them thanks for their account thereof. They recommend to them, however, the praiseworthy correspondence with this Rev. Classis, and the maintenance of that good order customary in the churches of the Fatherland.[31]

The Committee ad res Exteras commended them for having acted "legally, wisely and well," as the need of the Church demanded.

This episode represents a tentative and uncertain step in the direction of autonomy for the American Church. It is the first recognition (however tacit) of the need for other-than-Amsterdam ordination. It indicates a turning away from the danger, distance and expense of an Atlantic round-trip, to solve the ministerial shortage. Yet in submitting their action to the Classis of Amsterdam for ratification, the American ministers automatically acknowledged the jurisdiction of that body; indeed, considering the weak state of the Church, they could have harbored no thought of an independence, which would need to wait for another century.

Jealous of its authority, the Classis was quick to see both ecclesiastical and civil threats to the Church in America. It repeatedly warned against the pietistic sects which, with the founding of Pennsylvania, now rapidly

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[31] Ibid., 730.

increased along the Delaware. Among their own nationality there were Lutherans, Quakers and a group known as Labadists who worshipped in the Reformed Church but rejected its Forms and Liturgy. Regarded as schismatics, they had been expelled from the Church in the Netherlands, and now began to appear in America, creating strife in the congregations.[32] The church at New Castle, Delaware, was warned: "Do not undertake . . . anything of importance which savors of change without first communicating with the Classis of Amsterdam."[33]

Probably most feared by the Classis down to the end of British authority was the rise of disputes within the Reformed Church which would require litigation of initially ecclesiastical matters in the civil courts of the English. They were alarmed lest such a course would lead to State domination of the Church, bring establishment of the Church of England, and terminate the surrender-guarantees of freedom. The English were already attracting many hangers-on,

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[32]The Labadists were led by the Rev. Jacob Coelman. They refused to use liturgical forms, to observe church festivals, or to submit to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. While their theology was mainly that of the Reformed Church, their aim was to restore primitive Christianity including communal property. They began a colony in Maryland in 1683. Fiske, II, 74ff, and Henry C. Murphy, Anthology of New Netherland; or Translations from the Early Dutch Poets of New York, with Memoirs of their Lives. "Bradford Club Series," No. 4 (New York: Privately published, 1865), pp. 94-108.

[33]ERNY, II, 850.

and Dominie Van Zuuren (pastor of faction-ridden Long Island churches) warned in 1681 that the English Party amongst the Dutch was destroying the Church. When Van Zuuren discharged a school teacher who quarreled with the Consistory, the churchmen were summoned before the justices of the peace. An unusual attempt was made to settle the matter "out of court" by calling in prominent members of an outside congregation. When the trouble broke out anew, the teacher was put in jail, and then freed when a non-Reformed citizen furnished bail. Worrying about the trial, set for December of 1681, Van Zuuren wrote the Classis:

> The case is not in danger so long as the proceedings are conducted lawfully. . . . But the judges are antagonistic to us; and the people who are of no religion, or of another religion, are to pass sentence upon ministerial censures, pronounced by us on one who is subject to us. Will the liberty of our Church remain? . . . It all depends on the interpretation of the judges. Three out of five of these he has on his side.[34]

In August, 1683, a new religious element was introduced into the province with the arrival of Governor Thomas Dongan, an Irish Catholic, accompanied by a Jesuit priest and several families of Catholics; the first Catholic mass in New York City was celebrated on October 30th. The Duke of York had ordered Dongan to permit all faiths to worship in the colony as long as they did so peacefully; this unusual spirit of tolerance was the result of the Duke's

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[34] Ibid., 791-792. Unfortunately, there is no indication in the Records as to the disposition of the case.

adherence to Catholicism, and his hopes to revive that faith in England and the Colony. One of the best colonial governors, Dongan was liked because of his honesty and liberal views. His grant of a legislative assembly dispelled some of the early distrust caused by his religion, and raised the hopes of the democratic element which had long agitated for a share in the government of the colony. He also awarded charters for municipal government to New York and Albany, but appointed the mayor and officials in New York himself in order to avoid excessive popular control. Three of his Councilors (Philipse, Van Cortlandt and Bayard) were prominent members of the Dutch Reformed Church.

However, Dongan's economic policy favored the great landowners, the monopolistic merchants at New York port, and the Albany fur-traders. Those left out of this comfortable arrangement--the ambitious merchants and landowners of second rank, the grain-growers of the middle Hudson, the small farmers of Long Island and the urban artisans--were increasingly angered and alienated because of their exclusion. While taxes mounted, the provincial economy declined, partly because of the deflection of New Jersey trade to the rapidly-rising new port of Philadelphia. In 1686, the assembly so joyfully received three years earlier by the Dutch majority was extinguished when James

the Duke and Proprietor became James the King, thus adding to an explosive situation.[35]

The religious factor, in a direct way, was no less contributory. Rumors began to circulate that James II and Governor Dongan were plotting to establish the Catholic religion, thus stimulating rabid sentiments against Popery among the Protestant population. Increasing pressure upon the French Huguenots by Louis XIV, culminating in the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) had brought many indigent Huguenot exiles to the province during the decade, and into the Dutch Reformed connection.[36] Dutch memories and hatreds of the previous century combined with the fresh experiences of the newcomers to form a violent suspicion of a Catholic conspiracy, and French-English tensions over the fur trade only added to the fear. In this manner the stage was set for the Leisler Rebellion, which deeply involved and affected the Reformed Church and damaged its fabric.

When in 1686 the Dominion of New England united all the colonies north and east of Pennsylvania, the status of the Dutch Church remained unchanged. Andros' instructions

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[35]The material in the preceding two paragraphs is largely based on the much more elaborate assessments found in David M. Ellis, et al., pp. 32-33, and in Jerome R. Reich, Leisler's Rebellion: A Study of Democracy in New York, 1664-1720 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 7-8 and 181-183.

[36]By 1688 the French were numerous enough to have five churches in New York.

were simply "to permit freedom of conscience." To the resentment of New Yorkers, the Dominion was administered from Boston, with an unpopular Lieutenant-Governor Francis Nicholson (who, rumor said, was a Catholic) responsible for New York, assisted by the same Dutch Councillors who had served Dongan. Upon Nicholson fell the brunt of the Rebellion.

Private letters carrying news of the Glorious Rebellion in England and the landing of William III on November 5, 1688, reached Nicholson on March 1, 1689. The Governor and his Councilors decided to suppress this information, fearing the response of the discontented populace, and to await the official proclamation of the new monarchs. Such secrecy was not long maintained, and the governor's continued delay in acknowledging William and Mary served only to confirm the popular suspicion of a Catholic plot on the part of Nicholson and Dongan (who was still in the area). Amid the wildest rumors, popular action was precipitated by the arrival of details concerning New England's own Glorious Revolution against Andros in Boston.[37]

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[37]The most recent and thorough study of the Rebellion from all aspects is Jerome R. Reich, Leisler's Rebellion: A Study of Democracy. For a collection of documents, with introductory essays, see Michael G. Hall, Lawrence H. Leder, and Michael G. Kammen (eds.) The Glorious Revolution in America: Documents on the Colonial Crisis of 1689 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia, 1964, pp. 82-140. Volume II of the

In New York City and on Long Island the people rose up and ousted their officials, replacing them with ones of their own choosing. The revolt spread up-river to Westchester and as far as Kingston, while the citizens of Hackensack and Elizabethtown brought New Jersey into the movement. Indicative of the depth of frustration and anger among the lower classes, the rebellion had no leader at first, although Jacob Leisler was one of five militia captains who took turns in command of the fort. A Committee of Safety temporarily assumed the responsibility of governing the province, repudiating the authority of Nicholson, who fled to England in mid-June, devolving his authority upon the Councilors. When the militia rejected the command of Councilor Bayard who headed the militia, the rebels named Leisler captain of the fort on June 28, and opened the door to his full control by making him commander in chief two weeks later.[38] To insure against papist betrayal, Catholic officials, including the Customs Collector, Matthew Plowman,

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Ecclesiastical Records also has good partisan documentary material.

[38]Leisler, of German origin, arrived practically penniless in New York in 1660. He married a wealthy widow in 1663, through whom he became connected with leading families in the province--Bayards and Van Cortlandts. A staunch member of the Reformed Church, he was thrice chosen elder in New York City. Of stubborn orthodoxy, he was jailed for meddling in the Van Rensselaer dispute in Albany. He was also obsessed with the Catholic conspiracy. Reinforcing this fear was a warning from a Connecticut group in 1686 of the need to be alert against "a papistical design." ERNY, II, 920.

were removed and measures were taken to guard against the rumored appearance of a French fleet.

The cautious ministers of the Dutch Church had upheld Nicholson's delay, fearing that the position of the Church might be compromised by hasty action. But there was much more to their position. Not only did they associate themselves socially with the ruling class, but they were accustomed to receive deference as representatives of the spiritual arm of divinely-instituted government. Calvin had taught that the masses had no right to rebel against a prince or government, no matter how evil. Only another prince or someone from the ruling class duly invested with authority might lead them to revolt, as William of Orange had led the Dutch people against Philip the Second. On a more personal level, Councilors Bayard and Van Cortlandt were elders in the Collegiate Consistory of New York which, together with the ministers, completely controlled the affairs of the Church.

While their ministers supported the royal officials, the vast majority rallied behind Leisler, who despite his wealth remained sympathetic to the poorer classes. The record of his period in office dispelled charges of demagoguery. He convened a representative assembly, checked the expanding power of the aristocratic monopolies, reformed the unjust tax system, and generally improved the condition of

the laboring classes in the towns and cities.[39] The result for the Dutch Church was a cleavage between clergy and members as great as that dividing the social classes.

To no avail, the ministers berated Leisler from the pulpit and refused baptism to the children of his supporters. As a result, three-fourths of their congregation walked out, refusing not only to hear them, but to pay their contracted salaries. The lower classes generally, and particularly the Dutch artisans, regarded Leisler as their champion against autocracy, Catholicism and the ruling oligarchy.[40] The merchants at Albany, who had refused to recognize the rebel government, did an about-face when the French raided Schenectady in 1690, an act which seemed to confirm Leisler's charges. But even there Delius, the minister, continued to deny Leisler's authority.

In the warfare between rebels and the Dutch ministers, Delius fled first to New York City, then to Boston; Varick on Long Island took flight to New Castle but returned to New York City where he was apprehended and jailed. Dominie Selyns' offer of surety was refused, and Varick spent a year in prison, then was tried, fined eighty pounds,

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[39]In his review of Reich's book, Oscar T. Barck mentions this as one of the first class wars, and describes it as a struggle between the aristocratic landowners and merchants and the town workers. American Historical Review, LIX, No. 3 (April, 1954), p. 737.

[40]David M. Ellis, et al., p. 34.

and forced to remain in jail till the fine was paid. He died in 1694, never recovering from the effects of his incarceration. At one point, Selyns wrote the Classis of Amsterdam urging that the King of England be requested to send a governor immediately, and threatening to return to Holland if this were not done.[41]

After the long-delayed arrival of Sloughter in March, 1691, Selyns arose in his pulpit and preached a bitterly anti-Leisler sermon on the text: "I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living," which only widened the breach in the church. Leisler and his son-in-law Milbourne were brought to trial the next month, and Selyns, Delius and Varick, together with the wealthier citizens--and especially women--joined in a demand for the death penalty, although a Huguenot minister presented a petition for clemency. Selyns brought the news of their sentence to the two men, and administered the last rites before the execution. According to traditional accounts, the governor signed the warrants while intoxicated.[42]

Order was gradually restored, but the Dutch Reformed Church was badly split and greatly weakened. The pro- and anti-Leisler political factions disturbed the affairs of

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[41] C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 36.

[42] Edward R. Ellis, p. 98; David M. Ellis, et al., p. 35.

Church and State for more than two decades. The Leislerians were in eclipse between 1691 and 1695. The effect of that period upon the Church was described by five pro-Leisler partisans in a joint letter to the Classis of Amsterdam, written in 1698.

> Those who had been most bitter in these affairs [against Leisler] were elected to fill all the Church-offices. Thereby the people came to abhor the public services of religion, so that only about one tenth enjoyed the celebration of the Lord's Supper. And some to this day, (after nearly nine years, 1691-1698) have never resumed the celebration of the same. Domine Selyns was principally to blame for this. He incessantly vindicated the acts of the Magistrates in all these affairs, and declared that unless the people confessed their faults there could be no pardon.[43]

When the Leisler faction regained control, the dead man's sons secured an Act of Parliament removing "attainder of treason," and legalizing their father's authority. The two bodies were disinterred at midnight, "withe the sound of trumpet and drums," and permitted to lie in state for some weeks. They were then re-buried in the Dutch churchyard, according to one bitter anti-Leislerian, "attended by one hundred men in armes, and a mobb of fifteen hundred men, chiefly Dutch, the scum of that and the neighboring Provinces. . . . "[44] This was done over the protests of the Consistory and all the clergymen of the City.

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[43] ERNY, II, 1258.

[44] Ibid., 1345-1346. "John Keys 32 Heads of Accusation Against Bellomont." This is the statement of an anti-Leisler partisan.

What of the Church and its clergymen? Varick, finally released from prison, was boycotted in his pulpit; only a few contributed to his support, and death soon answered his petition to the Classis for removal to another pastorate. Leisler partisans placed most of the blame upon Selyns for involving the Church;[45] and although his congregation "had more of the better element in it," he was forced to suffer insults on the streets and an arrears in pay for several years. By siding with the wealthy parishioners (merchants and landholders) and the English authority, the clergymen had caused many members to drop out of the Dutch churches. During this time of troubles, Selyns was the only functioning minister, and his audience was sour and partisan. An incidental result of the rebellion was to delay the building of a new church in New York City until 1692, when the inadequate old building in the fort was relinquished to the English.[46]

Thus the accession of "Dutch William," which should have at least been a time of hope and anticipation for his Anglo-Dutch subjects in New York, proved instead to be a time of strife and schism. With the Protestant succession secured in England, the Anglican Church resumed efforts to extend its power and membership in America. The main agencies conducive to these ends in the provinces of New

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[45] Ibid., 1251.

[46] See also and especially ERNY, II, 1021 (1691).

York and New Jersey were the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel established at the end of the century, and the office of the Governor. On the other hand, the few Dutch clergy found a capable if dictatorial leader in the Rev. Henricus Selyns who, in the decade preceding his death in 1701, gave such direction (if not unity) as there was: corresponding at least annually with the Classis, rallying the local churches, and engaging in provincial politics whenever it touched on religious matters--which was almost constantly.

In April, 1691, a bill was introduced in both Council and Assembly, which held far-reaching and dangerous implications. Entitled (in the Assembly) "A Bill for settling the Ministry, and allotting a Maintenance for them, in Every Respective City and Town that Consists of Forty Families and upwards," it was rejected, but repeated attempts to carry it finally resulted in a modified bill in 1693, under the notorious Governor Fletcher. In brief, its purpose was to establish the Anglican Church in New York. The authorization for this action was stated in the commissions granted to both Sloughter and Fletcher in the name of William and Mary:

> And we do by these presents further authorize and impower you to colate any person or persons in any Churches, Chappels, or other Ecclesiastical benefits

> within our said Province and Territories aforesaid as often as any of them shall happen to be void.[47]

However, secret instructions were more specific. With either stick or carrot techniques these powers might be enlarged. The main obstacle was the preponderantly Dutch Assembly, in which there sat only one Anglican.[48] When Fletcher, in his opening address to both Council and Assembly (October 24, 1692) recommended "that provision be made for the support and encouragement of an able ministry,"[49] he was ignored. In September, 1693, he turned on the pressure, having meantime cultivated the Dutch clergymen.[50] An Assembly Committee of eight members set to work, but after a week of debate brought in an Act applying only to the four lower counties, New York City, Westchester, Queens and Richmond. To combat the "Profaneness and Licentiousness" pervading the province "for want of a settled Ministry," the Act provided for six "good and sufficient Protestant" ministers in the areas designated; these clergymen were to be supported from public funds levied annually by ten Vestrymen and two Church Wardens chosen by the freeholders.

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[47]For Sloughter's commission, ERNY, II, 980; for Fletcher's, ERNY, II, 1037. There are minor changes in wording and punctuation.

[48]C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 42-43.

[49]ERNY, II, 1045.

[50]For instance, he helped them to collect their arrears in salary dating from Leisler's Rebellion. C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 41.

Refusal to pay was to be punished by distraint of property. The final article settled the power to call a minister upon the Vestrymen and Church Wardens in each area.[51]

Fletcher returned the Bill to the Assembly, demanding the insertion in Article VI of the words "And presented to the governor to be approved and collated," which would give him the ultimate approval of the minister presented. But the Assembly would give the angry governor nothing more, and though he prorogued that body, the Act stood. While it did not specifically say that the clergy had to be Episcopalian, Fletcher and subsequent governors interpreted the law so as to make the Church of England the established church in these four lower countries. Their intention was made plain by the argument that no other Churches used the terms "Vestrymen" and "Church Wardens." This interpretation as applied meant that the Dutch Reformed, English Presbyterians and all others had to contribute to the support of the Anglican Church, as well as their own, in the lower counties.[52] Neither party was pleased with the situation; the Dutch feared the growing English population would bring an

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[51]For the Ministry Act, ERNY, II, 1077-79.

[52]Of the counties involved, the Dutch were preponderant only in New York City. The Act never applied to such overwhelmingly Dutch counties as Albany, Ulster and Kings. A few years later, the Assembly ruled that even Dissenting Ministers could be called under the Act. Yet recent histories continue to state that "the Church of England became the colony's official Religion." (See E. R. Ellis, p. 102.)

extension of the Act; the governor and Anglicans hoped for just such a result. Rather noncommittally, Fletcher reported to the Committee of Trade:

> I have gott them to settle a fund for a Ministry in the City of New York and three more Countys which could never be obtained before, being a mixt People and of different Perswasions in Religion.[53]

Although several attempts were made to repeal the Ministry Act, it prevailed until separation from England; Fletcher and his successors treated the Anglican Church as established by the Act, assuming that only Anglican clergy were entitled to public maintenance, which led many, Dutch and English alike, to accept it as a fact or principle.

The effects of the Ministry Act were immediately felt in the Dutch Church, and seemed like a gratuitous insult to an organization already dying. For at least three years they had received no correspondence from Amsterdam, due to the interruptions of King William's War; nevertheless, the three remaining ministers faithfully reported the decay of the American Church: (1692)

> (The churches of) Bergen, Hackensack, Staten Island and Harlem have deserted us, yielding to the power of evil. They say that they can live well enough without ministers or sacraments.[54]

And in 1694, Delius at Albany wrote of the continued hostility of the Leisler faction:

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[53] ERNY, II, 1084.

[54] Ibid., 1043.

> Domine Selyns and Varick will be compelled, on account of the evil spirit in their congregations, to lay down their respective offices, and remove or return home. I will also be obliged to return, on account of the poverty of my church, which declines from day to day, and will become more unable to pay me my salary.[55]

For many in the New York City area, their slight attachment to the Dutch Church easily evaporated, and they went over to the Anglican Church, impelled by their disaffection and drawn by the prospect of enjoying the favors of government and at less expense.[56]

The Ministry Act greatly alarmed Dominie Selyns[57] and the Consistory of New York City; the attitude of Fletcher, the arrival of zealous Anglican adherents such as Col. Caleb Heathcote, caused apprehension that their privileges might be withdrawn with the advent of an English majority. Back in 1688, when they had been making plans for a new church building, they had petitioned Governor Dongan for incorporation; they now intensified their drive for a charter which would guarantee their legal position and their property, enlisting the powerful political backing of their aristocratic constituents. The Consistory adopted a resolution to seek incorporation on April 18, 1695, and a month later presented their "humble petition" to Governor Fletcher,

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[55] Ibid., 1087.

[56] Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. II, No. 10 (January, 1828), pp. 312-315.

[57] For biographical sketch of Rev. Henricus Selyns, see Murphy, Anthology of New Netherland, pp. [79] - 183.

pressing their cause through the offices of men bearing the names Van Cortlandt, Bayard and Schuyler. After nearly a year a charter--the first of its kind issued in the province--was granted, and the grateful Consistory presented the avaricious governor "with a considerable service of plate," to the further detriment of the minister's arrears.

The charter (unchanged until 1784) confirmed the authority of the Consistory to fill their own pulpit, buy, sell and hold property, manage their own affairs, and levy rates on members to support clergy and church, subject to owning allegiance to Britain, and the payment of an annual rent of twelve shillings. About a year and a half later, the newly organized Episcopalian Church received a similar charter at an annual rent, one peppercorn.[58] From time to time, between 1719 and 1775, at least a half-dozen other Dutch Reformed churches in New York and New Jersey received similar charters; no other denominations were ever chartered, although Presbyterians, especially, and Lutherans made persistent efforts. The legal, corporate identity, at least, of the Church was now secure, and it enjoyed a favored position which may be described (like that of the Anglicans) as semi-established. While this led to increasingly amicable relations between Dutch and Anglican

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[58] ERNY, II, 1136-1165. Both charters given in parallel columns.

clergy, it also tempted the former to see an identity of interests which was misleading, and among the conservative and orthodox created a great barrier to Americanization of the Church in the next century. In 1765, Dominie Ritzema wrote:

> . . . our Netherlandish church has always been regarded by the Episcopalians as a national church, and for that reason held in esteem; and the kings have always provided our churches with charters, not only to manage their affairs according to the Netherlandish constitution established in the Synod of Dort, but also as a body corporate, to have and hold the property belonging thereto; which is denied to all other churches.[59]

If we accept the figures of John Miller, Chaplain to the English troops in the fort, who made a religious survey of the province in 1695, the Dutch Church was numerically very strong. Of more than 800 families in New York City, he ascribed 475 to the Dutch congregation but only 90 to the Anglicans, with about 200 to the French Huguenots. In the province, he counted about 3500 families (compared to about 5000 in Connecticut), with some 1750 under the Dutch Calvinists, under 100 for the Anglicans, and a surprising total of 1365 for English Dissenters.[60] Miller listed only

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[59]Edward T. Corwin, "The Character and Development of the Reformed Church in the Colonial Period," in Centennial Discourses; A Series of Sermons Delivered in the Year 1876 (New York: Board of Publications of the Reformed Church in America, 1877), p. 57.

[60]John Miller, A Description of the Province and City of New York; With Plans of the City and Several Forts as They Existed in 1695 (New York: William Gowans, 1862), p. 37.

one Anglican clergyman and one Anglican schoolmaster in the whole colony. The Dutch, despite a far longer history, had little more to boast of, with ordained clergy only at New York City and Albany, although this had improved by 1696 with three clergymen installed at Kingston, on Long Island, and in New Jersey.[61]

For a quarter century after 1696, the record of the Dutch Church is an odd mixture of gains and losses in ecclesiastical affairs. When William III named his personal friend, the Earl of Bellomont, to replace the dishonest Fletcher in 1698, old troubles flared anew, for Bellomont sided with the Leislerians and thus drew the enmity of leading persons in both Dutch and Anglican Churches. Criticizing in turn the Ministry Act of 1691 and the Church Charters of 1696 and 1697, he described the Dutch gift of plate to Fletcher as a mere bribe, and insisted on seeing the Church books. When he permitted the re-interment of Leisler and Milbourne, the upper classes refused to observe the day of fasting and prayer as designated by the governor.[62] Before his untimely death in 1701, this honest but trouble-plagued executive cancelled many land grants of his predecessors, charging they had been obtained by fraud. Dominie Delius at Albany, appointed civil agent among the Indians by Governor Fletcher, had managed to acquire a

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[61] ERNY, II, 1171.

[62] C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 49.

share of the extensive land grants. In 1699 Bellomont secured passage of a bill which vacated the grants and suspended Delius from the ministry.[63] The dominie left the colony, and was cleared by the Classis of Amsterdam, but never returned to New York. The succeeding interim governor, Nanfan, backed the Leislerians in an attack upon the aristocratic leaders of the Dutch Church, so that the elder, Nicholas Bayard, narrowly escaped the gallows.

Corruption, despotism and mismanagement marked the administration of Lord Cornbury, cousin of Queen Anne and governor from 1702 to 1708. His arrogance and obstinacy (along with his scandalous transvestite performances on the ramparts of the fort and the streets of the city) united all elements of the populace against him.[64] While the religious instructions of his commission were similar to those of earlier governors, he interpreted them as giving full authority over all the churches and schools of the provinces.[65] In many ways, Cornbury showed his favoritism for the Anglican Church, which he insisted upon regarding as fully established, and he tried to install its clergy in the pulpits of unwilling congregations, Independent, Presbyterian

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[63] Ibid., p. 49; ERNY, II, 1224 and passim.

[64] David M. Ellis, et al., p. 37; Edward R. Ellis, pp. 110-111; ERNY, III, 1711; Michael G. Hall, et al., pp. 138-139.

[65] New York and New Jersey were separate provinces but with the same governor from 1702 to 1738.

and Dutch Reformed, alike. The celebrated persecution of Francis Makemie, who was arrested and jailed in 1707 for preaching without a license, is only the best known of many incidents.[66]

While the church in New York City was protected by its charter, none of the other Dutch churches were, as yet, so fortunate. When Cornbury tried to force an Anglican clergyman on the Dutch congregation at Kingston (to whom he had already granted permission to seek a pastor in Holland), the church stoutly resisted, refusing to pay his salary. A new pastor arrived in 1706, and, accompanied by Col. Henry Beekman and others of the Kingston church, reported for the usual ceremonial introduction. To his bewilderment, the governor warned him not to preach without a license, on pain of banishment; but of course the license was not forthcoming. After many delays, the Dutch members of the Governor's Council demanded to see his Instructions, which revealed that his right of induction applied only to Anglican churches. The governor was forced to retreat, but not before a frantic appeal had been sent off to the Classis of Amsterdam to ask the Grand Pensionary of Holland to intercede with Queen Anne, so that they might remain

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[66]Carl Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 122-125; Pratt, pp. 57-58.

undisturbed in their former rights.[67] Nevertheless, the Dutch schoolmaster at Kingston was intimidated into applying for and accepting a license from the governor, thus seeming to acknowledge in a limited way the jurisdiction of the English civil government over an arm of the Dutch Church.[68]

The problem of civil jurisdiction was also involved in the difficulties facing the churches on Long Island, where factionalism offered the governor another opportunity to fish in troubled waters. A Reformed pastor left his charge at Schenectady unofficially and applied for the Long Island position where he could earn more money. Because he was ordained by the Classis of Lingen in Germany, he stood outside the jurisdiction of Amsterdam, which sent out an official replacement. Upon arrival of the latter, the interloper hurried to Cornbury and secured from him a license to preach in all the churches of Long Island. The ensuing dispute lasted from 1706 to 1713, filling the Council books, the congregational records, and the Minutes of the Classis of Amsterdam with a flood of charges and countercharges. The attempts of the exasperated and poorly-informed Classis to resolve the dispute across three thousand miles of Atlantic were fruitless. At the risk of imprisonment by Cornbury, the Classis appointee gradually assumed pastoral

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[67] ERNY, III, 1660-1662; for Cornbury's version, Ibid., 1669-1673.

[68] Ibid., 1617.

duties, although the governor threatened to force all Dutch ministers to obtain licenses. The recall of Cornbury in 1708 did not remove this problem for the Church. Indeed the next year produced still another variation of it in an attempt to force the ordination of a lay preacher in return for his agreeing to serve as chaplain to the expedition against Quebec.

These humiliations and frustrations of the early eighteenth century led to wistful but muted expressions of the wish for sufficient American organization and authority to render decisions without experiencing the delay, misunderstanding, and often lack of understanding involved in Classis correspondence. However, the position of the orthodox clergy was somewhat ambivalent, as illustrated in the long report to the Classis dated May 23, 1706. While complaining that the supporters of the intruding pastor "make the people believe that since we are so far off from the Classis of Amsterdam or any other Classis in Holland, that we have no transactions with the same," two paragraphs later they continued:

> Both the ministers, Antonides and Beis, and with whom I agree, deem it not inadvisable to hold a fraternal gathering once a year of all the Dutch ministers of this province; not so much for the purpose of discussing every ecclesiastical dispute that may come up, which would be impracticable for us; but more particularly thereby to confirm our fraternal unity; to devise schemes for all imaginable prosperity for the churches,

> and to maintain a continuous correspondence with the Rev. Classis.[69]

But even in the matter of so weak an organization, they would not act without the approval of the Classis, although all the ministers favored the idea.

Ironically, the reply of the Classis was long in coming because the carrying ship was captured by the French, and the second letter was not written until February, 1709. Commenting on the idea of an American organization, they were quite explicit as to their own inability to act, and as to their disapproval.

> You and your good friends can also readily see that we have no power, in the domains of another nation, to take special action against Freerman [the intruding minister], especially since he has the government on his side.
>
> The formation of a Classis among you, to correspond to ours at home, is yet far in the future, and we hardly dare to think of it. We shall really be doing very well, if we so much as succeed in getting this business of the Church back into its previous condition, to which we will give all diligence. Hitherto, to our sorrow, we have not made much progress therein; yet we do not despair. If we do not succeed in one way, we will try in another.[70]

Another very serious threat to the Dutch Church was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which was introduced in New York during Cornbury's period of misgovernment. Between 1702 and 1783, the Society sent 58 men into the province, not only to labor with the Indians and

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[69] ERNY, III, 1654-1655.

[70] Ibid., 1719.

Negroes, but to establish the Anglican churches where there were none, and to strengthen them where they had footings. It found enthusiastic support in New York, which had only three Dutch ministers, and in New Jersey, where there was only one; and the Society was especially active and successful during the reign of Queen Anne who staunchly supported the Church of England. The Society was unusually vigorous in Dutch areas where the pastorates were unfilled or poorly served or dissension produced indifference, both in New York and New Jersey. Several French Reformed congregations went over en masse, with their pastors. Only one Dutch clergyman appears to have "defected" and he returned to the Reformed fold three years later. But in places such as Northern New Jersey, Long Island and the Albany-Schenectady area the Society scored notable successes.[71]

At Albany in 1710, the Rev. Thomas Barclay catechized the youth, taught them English, and how to make responses to Anglican prayers, encouraging them by small gifts. The field lay wide open, for there was no Dutch minister between him and New York City, and his parish of Albany County contained (excluding three companies of troops) three thousand mostly

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[71]Bridenbaugh, Mitre and Sceptre, pp. 25-26, 57-59, and passim; also William W. Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1930), pp. 241-244, 253-254. One indication of the Society's aggressiveness was the publication of a Dutch translation of the Book of Common Prayer in 1704. "S.B.B.", "The Van Cortlandt Manor Frelinghuysen Chapter [D.A.R.] (Somerville, N.J.: no publisher, 1906), p. 31.

Dutch inhabitants. Once a month he traveled to Schenectady, seventeen miles to the west, where there had been no Dutch pastor for five years, and reported that the one hundred Dutch families there were his "constant hearers." He baptized the children of the parish, married the young people, and even performed parts of the service in the Dutch language. "More of them would accept my ministry," he wrote to the Secretary of the Society, "but that Mr. Du Bois, a minister of the Dutch congregation of New York, comes sometimes to Albany; he is a hot man and an enemy to our church. . . . "[72]

Col. Caleb Heathcote, also writing to the Secretary of the Society (1712), happily recounted the Anglican gains on Long Island at the expense of the quarrelling Dutch:

> . . . the Church at Jamaica is of late very much strengthened by a violent division which hath for a considerable time been raging among the Dutch in some of the neighboring towns concerning their minister of whom they have two and their heats being grown to that degree that there is now no hopes of a reconciliation many of those people have joined Mr. Poyer's Church which has not only increased the number of the auditors but his Communicants are augmented. . . . I could not omit telling you this piece of news.[73]

There can be no doubt that the policies of "Anglification" and "Anglicanization" were taking effect. Under the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel prepared a new edition of the

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[72] ERNY, III, 1866-1867.

[73] Ibid., 1903.

liturgy, printed in Dutch and English in parallel columns, for those who felt inclined to join the Anglican Church, "of which sort there are not a few, about New York and the Jersies."[74]

When the first wave of poverty-stricken Palatine Germans arrived in the province in 1709, a rivalry began between the Anglican and Dutch Churches to secure their adherence. Many, although not all, were German Reformed, and the Dutch church at Albany sent them food and provisions. The Classis was even more generous with money gifts to the emigrants than it was to its own American members, and also aided in recruiting ministers. In this manner, several churches and pastors came under the Dutch Reformed aegis. Thus began a long association between these two Reformed branches, which assumed more formal aspects in 1729 and lasted until 1792, having some effect upon the movement of the American Church toward autonomy and independence.

By 1720 the friction between the English civil authorities and the Dutch Church had eased, so that few problems arose over the dual status of the Dutch as British subjects and communicants of the established Church in the Netherlands. The conservative Dutch clergymen, both in New York and Amsterdam, continued down to the Revolutionary era to use one aspect of this relationship to thwart the faction

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[74]Nelson R. Burr, The Anglican Church in New Jersey (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1954), p. 230.

working for an independent Church. They repeatedly declared that to change the relationship of the churches in America to the Classis would violate the surrender guarantees and the charter, which preserved "that liberty of worshipping God according to the constitutions and directions of the reformed churches in Holland, approved and instituted by the National Synod of Dort." Any alteration might endanger their favored position which accorded privileges not granted any other non-Anglican denomination, and practically made them the equals of the Anglicans. There was an increasing tendency for the conservatives to support the civil government and establish cozy relations with the Anglican clergymen, thereby bolstering their own position.

While the ratio of Dutch to the whole population declined, they continued to increase numerically. In large areas they remained a substantial majority; although intermarriage made inroads, that proved to be a two-way street. Miss Van Horne became Mrs. Burnett, and Langevelt turned into Longfield, often accompanied by a change to Anglican or Presbyterian Churches. But many English and others disappeared in these amalgamations--most heavily in the upper Hudson areas. On the Mohawk, Alexander Lindsay Glen became known among his Dutch neighbors as "Sander Leendertse Glen." His descendants married into Dutch families, spoke Dutch

and merged their religion with that of the community.[75]

The Dutch Church, under the rather ineffective but unmolested supervision from Amsterdam, slowly but steadily expanded. In New York it filled in some of the gaps along the Hudson, and used some of the German Reformed to push westward on the Mohawk. At this point, the migration across the bay and the lower Hudson to northern New Jersey became very important. Fleeing the infertile soil of Long Island, the harassment of the governors, or dissension in their own churches, these Dutch settlers formed ten of the twenty-three Dutch Reformed churches which were established there between 1664 and 1720,[76] generally without ordained pastor or schoolmaster.

Living in scattered hamlets or on isolated farms cleared in the forest, preferably beside navigable waters, these migrants managed to preserve the remnants of Dutch culture represented by Church and language. If they were fortunate enough to have a lay-preacher, their services consisted of psalm-singing, the reading of homilies, and prayers. Largely owing to their attachment to Church and language, this area became known as "The Garden of the Dutch

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[75]Helen W. Reynolds, Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley before 1776 (New York: Payson and Clarke, for the Holland Society of New York, 1929), p. 79. (Also Dover Publications paperback, re-issued from first edition, 1965.)

[76]There were also five French and three German Reformed Churches founded in this period. See E. T. Corwin in Centennial Discourses, p. 104.

Church." From this area, fifty miles from New York City, now arose the movement to challenge the formalism and concern for "pure" doctrine, as well as the authority of the Church of the Netherlands, as perpetuated by the "civilized" pastors in New York.

CHAPTER III

THE COLONIAL CHURCH, 1675-1775
TOWARDS AN AMERICAN CHURCH:
DIVISION AND RE-UNION

The period of complacency and smugness produced in the Dutch Church by successful resistance to the civil powers, by the protection of its charters, by its numerical superiority and by its self-regard as the equal of the Anglican Church had only a brief unchallenged existence. Although external pressures were, in the main, removed, the half-century preceding the Revolution was marked by bitter internal strife. The sequence of events which created and progressively intensified this division involved the decay of rigorous Calvinism, the ministry of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, the Great Awakening, the drive for autonomy within the American Church, and the resulting schism from 1755 to 1772 which seemed beyond efforts at reconciliation. Only as the struggle for national independence loomed was the Church re-united, but in a condition so weakened as hardly to withstand the buffeting of the war years.

Although there were established Churches in nine of the thirteen colonies at the opening of the eighteenth century, the decline of religious fervor extended to all areas. But colonial Calvinism especially had deteriorated to a state of dead formalism and mere adherence to inherited creeds. Many causes contributed to this condition. Rationalistic ideas, generated by Newtonian science and Lockeian philosophy, had begun to reach America in various attractive disguises of Arminianism, which helped to undermine orthodoxy. In urban areas the break-down of piety resulted from increasing wealth and worldly attractions; in the frontier areas, ignorance, illiteracy and an inadequate ministry were contributory factors. Because of the patterns of settlement, each denomination and sect was simply an agglomeration of local churches without a higher American judicatory or disciplinary body. Increasingly, too, the churches were dominated by lay members, on the principle that to pay the minister entitled them to choose the minister--as well as to decide theological niceties.

However, several counter-forces began to develop as the century began. Evangelical pietism, introduced by the German sectarians, appeared in the middle colonies after 1695. Another important force arose out of the clash of divergent factions within the Presbyterian Church; one group arrived in New Jersey, by way of Long Island, from New England where it had been exposed to the "loosening" effects

of congregationalism; the other consisted of Pennsylvania Scotch-Irish, who organized the Philadelphia Presbytery in 1706 and maintained strong connections with the Irish Synod, the General Assembly in Scotland, and the universities there. In New England, too, "spiritual quickenings" began to occur.

From these elements arose the revival movement known as the "Great Awakening." In point of time, the term is limited to the great ministry of George Whitefield from 1739 to 1742, but the consequence was in waves of revivalism which lasted until the Revolution. While the enthusiasts preached a return to the Calvinist doctrines of total depravity, unconditional grace and justification by faith, these tenets were overshadowed by the new techniques and somewhat different emphases which were revivalist innovations. These included the possibility of regeneration--an abrupt conversion experience; the use of emotionalism and dramatic preaching as a stimulus to moral re-birth; and the tendency to view God's Church as transcending denominational or parish loyalties, thus encouraging "itinerancy" among ministers and lay members.

The appearance of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the colonies (1701) and the fears raised by its persistent requests for a suffragan bishop in America led several denominations to organize higher ecclesiastical units between 1705 and 1720. The Massachusetts consociations, the similar organizations resulting in Connecticut from the

Saybrook Platform, the Baptist Association of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Presbytery proceeded from a desire to defend themselves against Anglican aggression but also to combat the growing impiety promoted by Science and Reason. Inevitably, the creation of these organizations led to debates and arguments between conservative and liberal clergymen, affecting the denominations in varying degrees. With some exceptions, the divisions found the older ministers, European-born and trained, on the conservative side favoring maintenance of tight control over ordination of clergy and emphasis on doctrine. The younger clergy were American-born and increasingly American-trained; they urged the conversion test for admission to pulpit and congregation, and adaptation of the Church to American needs.[1]

The religious conservatives, rigidly sectarian, opposed these "novelties" as threats to the social and intellectual primacy of the established Churches. When the "new lights" tried to expand by creating educational and ecclesiastical institutions independent of Europe, the conservatives regarded this as a challenge to the existing

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[1]This brief general summary of the origins and elements of the "Great Awakening" is based on the "Introduction," pp. xiii to lxi, in The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and its Consequences, edited by Alan Heimert and Perry Miller (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967). This is a volume paperbound in the American Heritage Series. First published in 1920 but still extremely useful is the slender volume by Charles H. Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1958).

constitutions of the established Churches in discipline and doctrine. The older, European-trained ministers feared social as well as ecclesiastical anarchy; tending to ally themselves with the upper class, they looked with distaste on the manifestations of social discontent displayed in the "Awakening."

> At the heart of the evangelical ethic was the hope of human betterment, the vision of a great community in which men, instinctively as it were, would seek the general welfare. Where evangelical virtue might lead America was disclosed in the sermons of the 1740's and 1750's denouncing the acquisitive ethic of Arminian rationalism. But Calvinism was not merely negative in its social attitudes, and much of the drama of the decade after the Awakening consisted in the effort of the Calvinist mind to find new and positive means of applying its definition of true virtue in American society--in the life of the body politic, as well as in that of individuals. Rapidly and radically Calvinism's vision of the social good flowed into political protest, into challenges to the "rulers" of colonial society, and eventually, into the discussion and the activity that preceded and accompanied the American Revolution.[2]

Whatever its relation to Amsterdam, the Dutch Reformed Church did not exist in an American vacuum; its clergymen were aware of, but little touched by the innovations. Down to the Revolution, a decreasing but obstinate minority resisted all changes, while an increasing majority subscribed to the Awakening and the forces which it released. At first the clergy felt secure behind the barriers of surrender guarantees, their social position, and their language. They were quite unprepared for the blast which

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[2]Heimert and Miller, p. lviii.

swept in on them from the Atlantic in January, 1720, with the appearance in New Jersey of the Reverend Frelinghuysen.

At the end of Dutch rule there were no churches of any kind in this province, and probably not more than two hundred people.[3] This handful of settlers occupied the area around the village of Bergen, founded in 1660. After the English conquest, with the opening of land sales by the proprietors and the efforts of the governors to undermine the Dutch Church in New York, the trickle of Dutch into New Jersey increased, drawn by cheap, fertile lands and easy water communication with New York City. Primarily farmers, they settled in the rich, often swampy lands along the Hackensack, Passaic, and later the Navesink and Raritan Rivers. They brought with them little but their language and their religion, both of which tended to deteriorate after a few generations of rural isolation. The first church congregation was organized about 1660, but regular services were conducted only three or four times a year by clergymen who came over from New York, often at considerable danger and sacrifice. In this area, even before the arrival of Frelinghuysen, we can discern a weakening of the church ties with the Classis of Amsterdam.

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[3]Richard P. McCormick, New Jersey from Colony to State, Vol. 1 of the New Jersey Historical Series (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), p. 12. See also in the same series, Vol. 10, Adrian C. Leiby, The Early Dutch and Swedish Settlers in New Jersey, p. 65.

Between 1679 and 1682, the Bergen church and congregations at Hackensack and on Staten Island were served by the itinerant preacher, Peter Tesschenmaker, who was the first Reformed clergyman ordained in America (although it was the work of a highly irregular, "self-proclaimed Classis. . . . ")[4] A historian of the Staten Island church wrote: " . . . he was the first preacher to throw in his lot completely with the settlers, sharing the difficulties of their pioneer life."[5] With Tesschenmaker's removal to the church at Schenectady (where he was killed in an Indian raid in 1690) the Bergen church was without a pastor for seventeen years, being served irregularly from New York City.

As a forerunner of Frelinghuysen in northern New Jersey, William Bertholf (1656-1726) merits special attention because he introduced many elements which disturbed the complacency and formalism of the New York pastors while at the same time indicating directions which the Awakening would follow. Arriving at Bergen in 1683 with a small group of laborers from the southern Netherlands, he shortly crossed the Hudson to Harlem, where he drew the attention and scorn of Church leaders for his Leislerian activities and zealous

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[4]Wallace N. Jamison, Religion in New Jersey: a Brief History, Vol. 13 of the New Jersey Historical Series (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), p. 30.

[5]Henry D. Frost, "The Church on Staten Island," in Tercentenary Studies, 1928; Reformed Church in America; a record of beginnings (New York: Published by the Church, 1928), p. 84.

pietism. Dominie Selyns complained to the Classis (September 20, 1685):

> . . . troubles are arising in other of the neighboring churches. Certain men came over last year with certificates from Sluys in Flanders, and from Middleburg and Groode, in Zeeland. They were only tailors or shoemakers or cobblers, yet they endeavored to be promoted in this place or in that to the office of precentor and schoolmaster. . . . They speak against the church, public prayer and the liturgy of the church . . . and almost say, that the public prayers are spurious . . . so many spirits of error, myriad-eyed, wait for the destruction of the Church of God; while the Rev. Classis turns not a single eye of pity, nor casts even the slightest glance for the strengthening of a distant church which is in deadly peril.[6]

Bertholf recrossed the Hudson to Acquackanonck (Passaic) in New Jersey, and finally came to rest nearby at Hackensack, where he bought a farm. As at his previous residences, he served the little community as lay preacher --teaching the youth on weekdays and conducting the worship on Sunday. His devotion and piety so impressed the two congregations at Acquackanonck and Hackensack that they subscribed from their meager funds to send him to the Netherlands for examination and ordination by the Classis of Middleburg. The New York pastors, smarting from the indignities imposed by their Leislerian communicants, anxious about their position under the Ministry Act, and alarmed for the purity of doctrine, fired off salvoes of letters to the Classis of Amsterdam, the Synod of North Holland, and even to the Classis of Middleburg, hinting at the dangers

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[6]ERNY, II, 907-909.

to the Church and its authority involved in the situation ("If he succeed, there will soon be more of his kind follow."), criticizing Bertholf in a most uncharitable fashion, and asking that the ordination be prevented.[7] Some of these letters rode on the same ship that carried Bertholf in April, 1683. Meantime they tried to divert him from Middleburg, where he was certainly known, to the Classis of Amsterdam, where their censures might operate to prevent ordination. The candidate refused to be deflected, and his reason was that half of the Classis members were "not regenerated men,"[8] thus anticipating one of the chief characteristics of the Awakening, in experiential religion.

The Classis of Walcheren, completely ignoring the protests, accepted the memorial and petition which Bertholf carried, heard him preach on the text "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," and approved the request of the two New Jersey towns for his ordination.[9] By February of 1684 he had taken up the duties of his pastorate although three months later the Classis of Amsterdam entered a minute commenting that he had been sent contrary to their recommendation and that of the Synod of North Holland. In New York, the clerical monopoly considered calling a rare

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[7]ERNY, II, 1051; 1067; 1072; 1105-6.

[8]Ibid., 1107.

[9]Ibid., 1072-1073.

conference to decide whether or not to recognize the new minister. Wrote Delius from Albany:

> I do not know whether such acts will be repeated, nor can I imagine what will become of our Dutch churches in this Province if they are. For soon this marvelous kind of theology will develop here; ministers will be self-created, and the last will be first, and the first will be last. Rev. Gentlemen, it grieves us much that on account of this man, our church and its ordinations have become a matter of ridicule.[10]

Little can be said to justify the pettiness of the New York clergy with regard to Bertholf. True, they were worried about the governors' attacks, the potential effect of the Ministry Act of 1693, and were two years away from the security of their charter. But they were plainly more concerned about what the Bishop of London would think, about maintaining the Forms of Worship and the Doctrine of their Church, to say nothing of their own position, than about ministering to the mass of neglected people in their province. Bertholf plunged into his work, ignoring boundary lines of parish authority, and never acknowledging the jurisdiction of Amsterdam.[11] After the New York church received its charter, he was grudgingly recognized, but the Classis mentioned him no more.

Bertholf's ministry represents significant forces at work, both in the Dutch Church and in all the colonial churches, and he was a "trail-blazer" in many directions.

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[10] *Ibid.*, 1106.

[11] Jamison, p. 30.

He was the first American to journey to Europe for ordination, but he sought and received his authority from the Classis of Middleburg, rejecting the jurisdiction of Amsterdam. He was the first settled minister of the Reformed or any denomination in New Jersey, and he labored there alone for fifteen years. He operated as an itinerant ("Bartholf moves about and preaches everywhere," ignoring "parish" boundaries, complained Selyns.), laying the foundations for a half-dozen churches in New York and New Jersey, west of the Hudson between Tappan and New Brunswick. In his emphasis on emotional warmth, and on the conversion experience rather than doctrinal orthodoxy, in his ministrations to the ignorant and neglected Dutch of northern New Jersey, he prepared the way for Frelinghuysen, and then introduced Frelinghuysen to his pastorate of four churches on the Raritan in 1720.[12] Bertholf continued his services until 1724, dying two years later at the age of seventy, in the sixth year of Frelinghuysen's ministry.

Not until 1709 was Bertholf joined in his lonely labors by another ordained minister. The Rev. Joseph Morgan, a member of the Philadelphia Presbytery, found too few of his own flock in deeply forested Monmouth County and was permitted to devote three-quarters of his time to the forty-nine Reformed communicants of Freehold and Middleton,

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[12]Albert von Schlieder, "The Church in the Hackensack Valley," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 179.

learning Dutch in the process. Serving an area about twelve miles long and "five quarters of an hour of travel" wide, he is recorded as having received a hundred new members in his twenty-two years of ministry. He returned to full Presbyterian service in 1731, but not before an ecclesiastical collision with Frelinghuysen, to whom we must now turn.

As the Dutch migrating from New York settled along the water-courses of northern New Jersey, they entered the Valley of the Raritan (about forty miles from New York City) at the head of sloop navigation where an Indian path crossed the river. Isolated in their river farms and hamlets, they were too few and too poor to have a permanent pastor or schoolteacher; in their sequestration, the purity of their language, religion and culture deteriorated simultaneously. Occasionally, over a period of twenty years, Bertholf visited them to baptize, marry and preach. It was not until about 1715 that several villages decided to pool their resources to secure a minister from Europe, a venture which succeeded in 1719 through the services of the Classis of Amsterdam. Under the item "Classical Changes," the Synod of North Holland noted simply: "Sent to Raritan in the province of New Jersey: Rev. Jacobus Theodorus van Frylinghuysen [sic.]."[13]

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[13]ERNY, III, 2141. We shall emphasize here Frelinghuysen's role in the Americanization of the Church, rather than his association with the Great Awakening.

His long ministry of almost three decades was to shake the Reformed churches from their slumbering dependency and raise the vision of an autonomous Church in America, training and ordaining its own ministers, and settling its own problems through its own organization. The immediate result of his coming was a factional whirlwind marked by such bitterness and recrimination that it was not stilled until 1772.

Trailing clouds of pietism and evangelicalism, Frelinghuysen landed in New York early in January, 1720, and was asked by the junior pastor in the city, Henricus Boel, whether out of courtesy or curiosity, to preach two sermons in his stead on January 17. This was probably the first weekend after his arrival. Accustomed to unemotional set sermons which droned on for two hours or more (sometimes inaudibly) while the precentor turned the hour glass, the congregation was startled by Frelinghuysen's innovations in manner and message.[14] His evangelical sermon, his emphasis on regeneration, was such a departure from the customary sermon that it seemed to his hearers he was preaching new doctrines; and his "howling prayers," (he said later that

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[14]For impressions of Dutch services in New York City, still applying although of a later date, see Peter Kalm, Travels in North America, revised and edited by Adolph B. Benson, 2 Vols. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966), II, 621-625. For a brief description of services at Albany, where conditions were somewhat different, see ERNY, III, 2092-2093.

"he was so carried away that he did not hear himself"[15]) displeased his audience. Furthermore, he omitted the Lord's Prayer and, after the service refused to perform the baptismal rite--one of the two sacraments recognized by the Reformed Church. To cap his American debut, Frelinghuysen criticized the senior pastor for having a mirror in his home, objecting that it was unnecessary; whether on the grounds of vanity or luxury is not stated.[16]

Having loosed his blast at orthodoxy and gained immediate hostility, he moved on to his New Jersey pastorate, consisting of the four villages which had called him; here he preached his first sermon on January 31, 1720. Drawn or repelled by his message that "an upright life was not enough," parties formed almost immediately in both provinces, his enemies charging him with being a schismatic and teaching false doctrines. To defend himself as orthodox, he prepared a booklet of three sermons at the urging of his friends who published them in June, 1721. Two of his colleagues, Freeman and Bertholf, both long at odds with the New York clergy, endorsed the work, describing it as "three learned, well-digested, and thrilling sermons," as well as "highly sound and scriptural, and agreeing in the smallest particulars not only with the written word of God, but also with the

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[15]For reference to his "howling prayers," etc., ERNY, III, 2259.

[16]Ibid., 2260.

teachings of the Heidelberg Catechism, adopted as a rule of doctrine, as well as with the forms employed in our Dutch churches."[17]

Many influential and prosperous leaders of the congregations which had called him had not bargained for the message which he brought. Instead of outward conformity he insisted upon the experience of regeneration; in place of the mere preservation of Dutch traditions he demanded humility and true repentance. Consequently they resented it when he called them unregenerate Christians and excommunicated four of them.

> Much-loved hearers, who have so often been at the Lord's table, do you know that the unconverted may not approach? Have you then, with the utmost care examined, whether you be born again? . . . Or did you go blindly forward, . . . not examining whether you were of the number of those who are invited?
> . . . Let us then here be careful . . . here, by a morsel and swallow, can the covenant of God be desecrated; his wrath brought upon the whole congregation; and ourselves made liable to temporal and eternal punishment. Reflect, therefore, upon, and bear in mind this truth; and remember, that though moral and outwardly religious, if still you be un-regenerate and destitute of spiritual life, you have no warrant for an approach to the table of grace.[18]

Others, even Consistory members, he warned away from the Communion Table; in some cases he refused baptism and forbade children to repeat the Lord's Prayer; indeed, he was

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[17] Ibid., 2178-2180.

[18] Quoted from Sermons of Theodore Jacobus Frelinghuysen, translated by Rev. David D. Demarest (New York: [Board of Publications, Reformed Dutch Church], 1856), in Robert C. Whittemore, Makers of the American Mind (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1964), pp. 25-26.

not in favor of public prayer. Still others were alienated by his claim of the right to nominate candidates for elder and deacon. Not only were the consistories and congregations divided, but families and friends fell out; his critics hurried off to New York and found stubborn support in Dominie Boel and his lawyer brother.

By 1725, Frelinghuysen's churches were completely disrupted by his emotional preaching which, passing over cold liturgical formalism and doctrinal purity, emphasized personal moral reform and spiritual regeneration. His appeal was to the younger people and to the poorer classes, and although Dominie Boel went personally to the Raritan he could rally only the disaffected but not halt the increase of Frelinghuysen's followers, as preaching invitations poured in from other communities. The anxiety of his opponents (and the success of his revivalism) can be measured in the vehemence of their denunciation in a Klagte or Complaint, drawn up in 1725, probably by lawyer Boel. Consisting of 146 pages, every conceivable criticism of Frelinghuysen was included which might rouse the displeasure of the Classis and lead to his removal.[19]

But the opposition of the orthodox could not prevent the progress of the movement which was both the first tremor of the Great Awakening and evocative of ideas leading to

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[19] ERNY, III, 2244ff.

ecclesiastical independence. Although the conservatives refused to contribute further to Frelinghuysen's support and locked and nailed down the doors of two churches to keep out the heresy, the "ingathering" of the revival in 1726 was so great that it had several immediate effects. The Presbyterians of the New Brunswick area, led by Gilbert Tennent, appropriated its methods and message with the close collaboration of Frelinghuysen. Tennent's father, William, established the "Log College" at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania, where three of his sons and fifteen other young men received training for an evangelical ministry. In New York City, the Consistory "reactivated" their parochial school, appointing Barend de Foreest as schoolmaster. The stimuli for this action were several, including not only the wretched state of the Church but also the encroachments of English culture, especially the language. The reasons given in the school announcement seem to indicate that Frelinghuysen was having some effect even in New York City.

> One matter which the Rev. Consistory esteems of the highest importance, and wishes to impress deeply on the minds of you, the Christian Dutch Reformed Church of this City . . . that most of those who belong to us, either from general apathy, or a sad indifference to evangelical truth as well as to true piety--which we fear is the case, although we hope not--or to a wretched carelessness of necessary things, have now for some years neglected to have their children receive instruction in the Netherlandish tongue. Are not our youth, now growing up among us, living witnesses of this? And, to our sorrow, most of them are brought up without having the principles of the doctrine of Christ instilled in their minds. It is for such reasons . . . that they show such reluctance to attend our catechising. . . . Hence, all our hearts must be impressed

> with the necessity of instructing the young in the Dutch language . . . if this shameless neglect continues, no one can attribute the sad condition of our religion and our church, to anything else than our own carelessness; for under the happy rule of our Protestant (English) magistrate, full freedom is given us for the public exercise of our religion.[20]

From the first, revivalism ignored denominational lines, parish boundaries, social distinctions and linguistic differences. Frelinghuysen was guilty of all these formalist "crimes," thus raising a new rash of conservative complaints and deepening the rift in the Church. In June of 1729 he was charged with the following, in a letter to the Classis:

> You did permit a dissenting candidate [Gilbert Tennent], in one of the churches where you preached, at the Communion, to offer a prayer in English, before a Dutch congregation. This was done in the pulpit, after your sermon, and before the administration of the Supper; and afterward, also, you let him give the sign, in English [?!], as to when you should begin the administering of the Holy Supper; and also, that you had no objection to letting him preach in our Dutch churches, and in letting young men go around, without regard to the deacons, with the bag, in order to collect compensation for him. Is there to be no accounting for this before Divine and Ecclesiastical judgment seats? . . .
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> Then there is also that which was done against the order of the established Consistory of Navesink, and against the wish of Rev. Morgen [sic] their pastor. Did you not go there and preach in a barn? And did you not also go and preach at Joris Ryerson's in the Rev. Coen's congregation, where there is an established Consistory and pastor . . . ?[21]

To those who complained, these things were shocking and sacrilegious, and to use English in Dutch churches was a

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[20] ERNY, IV, 2341.

[21] Ibid., 2466.

positive and unmistakable violation of church order. Frelinghuysen replied that the Presbyterians were a sister Reformed Church and that it was proper to lend the Presbyterians the use of one of his four churches when he was not preaching there.

Between 1720 and 1730, the number of Reformed churches increased from forty to fifty, most of the new churches appearing in New York; the total number of clergy rose from thirteen to eighteen.[22] Requests for Dutch-trained clergy were difficult to fill, yet the conservatives (who were Netherlands-oriented) criticized the Classis for sending Frelinghuysen. The shortage of ordained ministers led to the appearance of some men who were irregularly ordained and others who were not a credit to their calling. For example, John Van Driessen was ordained by a Congregational church at New Haven, and hired to preach on the Van Rensselaer and Livingston Manors in 1727. Questions arising out of this ecclesiastical irregularity resulted in interminable correspondence with Amsterdam.

In the Raritan area, Frelinghuysen could not meet all the demands for his services. His forthright solution consisted of several innovations which any energetic pastor, unhampered by formalism and a foolish concern for consistency, could have inaugurated. He published his sermons in order to reach a larger audience; he trained and used lay preachers,

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[22]E. T. Corwin, Manual, pp. 724 and 766.

several of whom assumed the full duties of a pastor; and for twenty years he held private (secret) devotional meetings for those who were his known adherents.

In the decade of the 1720's, numbers of poverty-stricken, pastorless German Reformed immigrants had settled along the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware. The nearest Reformed churches were those served by Frelinghuysen, but these timid settlers feared that the Classis of Amsterdam would refuse them assistance if they appealed for his discordant ministrations. Consequently, these villagers sought help from the Dutch Reformed conservatives in New York City, one hundred seventy miles away. Although unordained, a pious school teacher named John Philip Boehm had performed all the functions of a minister among them since 1720. His constituents requested the Classis of Amsterdam in 1727 to give permission to the New York Dutch clergy to ordain Boehm there, thus eliminating the trip to Europe. The Classis solemnly deliberated and eventually gave its approval; but the Amsterdam body cautioned its German wards: " . . . this way of making a call shall not occur again."[23] Boehm was ordained in New York City two years later, raising an important question among the Dutch congregations: If the hazard and expense of European ordination could be waived for the Germans, why could not American ordination be permitted to Dutch candidates for the ministry?

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[23] ERNY, IV, 2470.

Despite the mounting complaints against Frelinghuysen, the Classis delayed any judgment regarding his alleged deviations until he had defended himself, and this he was in no rush to do. At the same time, the Amsterdam body tried to exert its authority over both factions. It chided those orthodox churches in New York and New Jersey which closed their buildings to keep Frelinghuysen's message from circulating, and it reminded them that they too were dependent on the Classis and Synod in the Netherlands for ecclesiastical decisions. In time, the Classical sentiment gradually veered toward the conservative position, moving cautiously, however, because it was well aware of the ambivalent status of the Church in America. It admitted: "Under a foreign power our ecclesiastical decision could not be carried out by any effectual instrumentality,"[24] and:

> We, indeed, know that the Classis has no power to carry out its own decisions, and to enforce them in particular cases, against those subjects to a foreign power. But this does not take away our right to pronounce a decisive judgment in a matter of such a nature, and to which both parties are bound to submit . . . as to an ecclesiastical decision, in consequence of subordination to Church-Order, which all are bound to recognize.[25]

Overtaxed by his exertions and worried by the persecutions, Frelinghuysen was reported in 1730 to have been robbed of his reason by sickness;[26] however, in a letter to

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[24] Ibid., 2413.

[25] Ibid., 2318.

[26] Ibid., 2640.

the Classis dated October 2, 1731, he reported that he was again in good health. While he denied taking liberties with Church Order, the Liturgy, or the Holy Sacraments other than permitted, he admitted that the Lord's Supper was administered standing, by local custom; that on the frontier it was impossible to have a Consistory meeting every week; and he confessed that in the marriage ritual, for a woman of sixty, he would neglect to exact the promise to bring up the offspring in a Christian atmosphere. For, the letter continued:

> We do not think that you would want to bind him alone like a child in his a-b-c-s, to the very words of the Forms at all times; for then he would sometimes make himself ridiculous. . . .
>
> For surely you well know, . . . that there is not one minister found in this land, who observes strictly all the Articles of the Church-Order.[27]

The question of Frelinghuysen's orthodoxy dragged on in the Classis for more than eight years, and served only to reveal the impotence of that body. Although the four churches served by Frelinghuysen adopted peace articles on November 18, 1733, which were read from the pulpits on the first three Sundays of the next year and then forwarded to Amsterdam for final approval, no peace came to them or to the Church. Many of the moderates, including the senior minister in New York City, Gualterus Du Bois, became convinced of Frelinghuysen's sincerity, and began to move over to the revival party. At the start of 1735, the Classis

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[27] *Ibid.*, 2556.

wrote to the "Ministers at New York," noting with unjustified relief the improvement in the Raritan situation, which they had been unable to settle. In the joy of their deliverance from a ten-year problem and a flood of paper-work, they concluded with a paragraph which led to immediate efforts to organize the American churches--with consequences they never intended. They wrote:

> We should be especially pleased if we could receive from you some Plan, which might tend to promote the union of the Dutch churches in your portion of the world, in doctrine and ecclesiastical business, according to the Church-Order, and the resolutions of Synod--but without impairing our Correspondence--either by holding a yearly Convention, or in such other way as you may think best.[28]

A proposal was shortly forthcoming. The Rev. Gerardus Haeghoort, of the Second River, New Jersey, church, acted upon the Classical suggestion and in March, 1737, submitted to the New York Consistory a "Statement of Reasons for the Necessity of a Coetus."[29] In considering this first formal proposal for an American body, the Consistory debated the question of the necessity for such an organization without raising any objections. Haeghoort, arguing for his idea, stressed that independency would surely result from the chaos in the churches if there was no organization to settle disputes, deal with irregularities, and maintain good church

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[28] Ibid., 2664.

[29] Ibid., 2679. A Coetus was an ecclesiastical assembly; the term was used to avoid giving the status of a Classis.

order. A decision was delayed until further consideration had taken place, but the Classis was notified that the question had been raised. By the end of May, despite some differences of opinion, the need for a Coetus was affirmed, and all the churches received a circular letter outlining the purposes of such an assembly and summoning representatives to meet in New York in the autumn. The Convention met from September 7 to 12, 1737, and drew up two Articles as the basis for a constitution; these regulated membership and the scope of the business to be transacted. Although seven ministers were present, only five signed their work. Before adjourning they set the last Monday in April, 1738, as the date for delegates from all the churches to convene. The report sent off to Amsterdam the next day noted that only one church raised objections to the plan.

Within a week, four ministers, including the two who had not subscribed to the plan, and Dominie Boel, the bitter enemy of Frelinghuysen, denounced the Coetus plan, as well as its proponents, to Amsterdam. Although the proposal acknowledged subordination to the Classis, these opponents charged that the goal of peace and prosperity for the American churches was only a smokescreen to cover up the intent of independence. Boel especially attacked his older colleague, "gentle Du Bois," who had joined the Frelinghuysen faction. Assuring the Classis of their whole-hearted attachment and submission, the conservatives requested to

be informed beforehand of any Classis action on the Coetus.[30]

As if to underline the need for an American body with some authority, a travel-battered letter finally reached New York in March, 1738. It contained Classical sanction for the request made two years earlier by the Dutch and German community of Scoharie, thirty miles west of Albany, for permission to examine and ordain John Schuyler in America, thus avoiding the danger and expense of a trip to Europe. The letter of approval, dated in Amsterdam on October 1, 1736, noted that "the call is not in exact accordance with the usual forms and customs of our Church," and carefully stipulated the formalities to be observed.[31] It was the long delay by the Classis which had spurred Rev. Haeghoort to press the formation of a Coetus.[32]

With this as a backdrop, the Convention called for New York on April 27, 1738, met and drafted a constitution for a Coetus and forwarded it to Amsterdam. Of the sixty-four churches and twenty-one ministers comprising the Church at this time, nine ministers and twelve elders, together representing at least twenty congregations, were present and signed the work. The accompanying letter noted only four ministers in opposition, but several who signed were

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[30] ERNY, IV, 2694.

[31] Ibid., 2702.

[32] Brown, p. 62; Eenigenburg, p. 47.

without the unanimous support of their Consistories or members.[33] Many churches were unrepresented because of vacant pulpits or too great a distance.

During the year in which the Classis studied the proposal, both factions showered that body with letters in support of their position. The Classis showed considerable duplicity in its response to these; while it used delaying tactics on the proponents of the plan, it wrote frankly to the opponents: "It is indeed as you write. The ministers of the churches in your regions must be vigilant in preserving a subordination to the Rev. Classis of Amsterdam."[34] On April 6, 1739, the Classis of Amsterdam made its decision, and in August it communicated its approval to the Americans--but only for the most ineffectual sort of an organization.

> We have . . . considered your Plan, as well as subsequent letters relating to the same. Our Classis considers that there are no objections to such an organization, if care be taken, which must be done, that no opinions be expressed in such Coetus concerning Doctrine; and that no examinations be held, preliminary or final, for licensure or ordination; for these things were reserved, by the Synod of Dort to the respective Classes.[35]

Within these bounds, it was quite friendly to an American organization, even encouraging its opponents to support rather than hamper it.

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[33] ERNY, IV, 2710.

[34] Ibid., 2713.

[35] Ibid., 2723; E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 105.

In New York, advocates of the plan had anticipated a grant of full jurisdiction. The Consistory of New York had even authorized the free use of its chamber for annual meetings of the projected Coetus. The emasculated plan returned to them precluded any useful activity on the part of such an organization, for the right of American examination and ordination was the heart of the matter. With disallowance, the enthusiasm of the ministers faded quickly. Although Dominie Du Bois tried to organize another meeting of the churches for April, 1741, the majority of the ministers felt there was no need for further sessions, so the plan lay idle for nine years. Despite continuing statements sensible of the needs, the creation of an American Coetus was not effected until 1747.[36] In the face of the trouble and problems arising in the American churches, it is difficult to explain the tenacity of the Classis in retaining strict supervision and control.

The division between the progressive-evangelist element and the conservative-formalist group was greatly widened by the dispute over the creation of a subordinate coetus, which arose just as the revival under Frelinghuysen reached its greatest success (1739-40). The victory of revivalism and the width of the breach were not lessened by the tours of Whitefield through New Jersey and New York in

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[36]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 59; Brown, p. 62; Jamison, p. 34; Eenigenburg, p. 47.

these years. Frelinghuysen had long prepared a bridge between the Dutch and English-speaking communities by sharing buildings and pulpits with Gilbert Tennent (always a sore-spot with the orthodox), and now the great English revivalist preached in the church at Raritan, and also in the church at Flatbush, on Freeman's invitation. When the Reformed, Boel, and the Anglican, Vesey, (both great supporters of establishment) denied Whitefield the use of their churches in New York City in 1740, a platform was built in an open field, and, to Boel's chagrin, his colleagues, the respected Du Bois and Frelinghuysen, both sat there during the sermon. All this and much more was sourly reported to the Classis.

In 1740 there were about sixty-five Dutch congregations but only twenty pastors. Two of the pastorates had been vacant for nine years despite repeated requests to the Classis for supply; others, with aging dominies, begged the Classis to begin searching for replacements. Three were sent between 1741 and 1744, but one was captured by Spanish pirates and greatly delayed; meantime two in America died. Because of the continuing waves of revivalism, the Church was suffering many losses to Dissenter and Anglican folds, partly due to the discord which gave the Reformed Church a bad reputation. When the Governor of New Jersey granted a charter to Monmouth County Presbyterians in 1749, a list of pew holders at "Old Tennent" church included the names

Voorhees, Vanderveer, Van Scoyac, Wikoff, Van Cleef, Van Matre, Stilleman, Sutphen and Van Kirk.[37]

The Frelinghuysen party now began to assume responsibility for training and ordaining ministers. The leader had, of course, been training assistants since his arrival in 1720. He was joined in 1737 by Peter Dorsius, a German-born, Dutch-trained clergyman who had been sent by the Classis of Rotterdam, apparently with authority to license and ordain.[38] He was assigned to serve the German Reformed congregations in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. His warm friendship with Frelinghuysen and William Tennent earned him the disfavor of the Classis of Amsterdam. Without any obligation to that body, and outside their jurisdiction, it was possible for him to begin the establishment of ministerial training among the Dutch in America.[39] Among his first "graduates" was John Henry Goetschius, who had been preaching from an early age in Pennsylvania although unordained. Goetschius sought Presbyterian ordination in 1737, but was refused because, while skilled in the learned languages, he

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[37]Abram I. Martine, (ed.) Bi-centennial Celebration, 1699-1899, Reformed Church of the Navasink and its Two Branches, The First Reformed Church of Freehold, Now Known as the Brick Church of Marlboro, N. J., and the Reformed Church of Holmdel, Formerly Known as the White Meeting House (New York: P. F. Collier, [1899?]), p. 149. Those who preferred a non-evangelical church, changed to the Anglican, of course.

[38]ERNY, IV, 2755.

[39]Maxson, p. 119.

was found "altogether ignorant in College learning, and but poorly read in Divinity. . . . " In October, 1740, four long-vacant Dutch churches on Long Island called him to be their pastor, and subsequently Goetschius was ordained by Dorsius and Frelinghuysen and installed by Freeman on April 19, 1741. Thus the revivalist, pro-Coetus group set about to supply the ministerial deficiency. Freeman justified this action by referring to earlier Classis permission for the irregular ordinations of Boehm and Schuyler. By April, 1741, Dorsius had four other young men under his instruction, two of them sons of Frelinghuysen;[40] but for a half-dozen years, yet, American candidates would journey to Amsterdam for ordination.

The period from 1720 to 1750 was of great importance to the future of the Dutch Reformed Church, and there were numerous signposts to indicate the direction which the Church would eventually take. Intermarriage and business relations resulted in wider contact with English culture as well as with other national and religious groups. At the same time, the number of those who had been born in the Netherlands constantly diminished. Exclusive use of the Dutch language in the Church came under increasing criticism, especially from the young people, from 1720 onward. About 1745 the Liturgy, Psalms and Hymns were translated into

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[40] ERNY, IV, 2753.

English, but seldom used. Complaints about the long, dull sermons in the New York City churches resulted in the Consistory's request (January, 1747) that

> ministers henceforth, would not extend their discourses beyond fifty minutes, or at furthest, an hour, so as to remove the complaints about long sermons, to increase the audiences and hold the people together, and so enlarge the alms and other revenues of the church; inasmuch as, after much deliberation, they judged that this would tend to prevent the decay of our church and congregation. . . .[41]

The custom of separating the sexes in church was ending, and families began to sit together in family pews. A small pipe organ, the gift of Governor Burnett, who was married to a member of the influential Van Horne family, was installed in 1727 (and John Peter Zenger, age 30, hired as assistant organist). Old customs and traditions were beginning to yield, but the conservative forces were unwilling to make concessions.

The situation with regard to an American Coetus remained at stalemate until 1747. Although forces on both sides of the Atlantic wished for some such organization,[42] they differed widely as to the authority which it should exercise. Certainly the need for an American body with extensive power had not diminished, as the confused state of

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[41] ERNY, IV, 2955-2956.

[42] In 1743, an abortive attempt appears to have been made to unite the German and Dutch Reformed Churches and the Presbyterian Church. Joseph H. Dubbs, A History of the Reformed Church, German, American Church History Series, Vol. VIII (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1895), 104.

ordination procedure indicated. Frelinghuysen's oldest son and namesake, who had been trained in America, journeyed to Amsterdam in 1745 for his ordination. Earlier, German-born John Caspar Fryenmoet, serving churches on the Delaware which he had organized, was irregularly ordained in 1741 by the Rev. George W. Mancius, who was himself the holder of obscure German credentials. When this ceremony was invalidated, the Classis, finally permitted it to be repeated in America according to Church Order, but only after a long debate as to whether Fryenmoet should be forced to travel to Amsterdam.[43]

Even more disruptive was the case of Swiss-born John Henry Goetschius, who performed all the duties of a minister for six years before his irregular ordination in 1741 at the hands of Frelinghuysen, Tennent and Dorsius. When Goetschius accepted a call to Long Island, many of his parishioners refused to recognize his ordination or accept his services, touching off an undignified squabble which lasted until 1748. To settle the dispute, Goetschius finally agreed to resume the status of a candidate and repeat the ordination ceremony, which was then acknowledged by the Classis.[44] During this period of nine years (1738-1747), five ministers arrived in America who had been trained and ordained in the Netherlands. At the end of this

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[43] C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 341, 412-413.

[44] Ibid., pp. 345-348.

period, it was the nomination to the Classis of Benjamin Vanderlinde, supported by many petitions for him to be ordained in New York, which helped finally to establish an American Coetus.

When the Classis of Amsterdam granted the German Reformed Church, over which it had supervision, the right to form a Coetus in Pennsylvania in 1747, it could hardly deny a similar organization to the Dutch churches, and it sent the Rev. Ulpianus Van Sinderen with directions to organize a Coetus at once. With this authorization, the New York Consistory invited all the churches to send representatives to a convention which met in September, 1747. The meeting organized a Coetus which was to comprise all the American churches, each to be represented by a minister and an elder. The eleven articles sanctioned by the Classis in 1737 were adopted, in effect acknowledging subordination to Amsterdam; only ecclesiastical matters were to be considered, and ministers arriving in the future were obliged to join. As provided a decade earlier, three "Circles" of neighboring churches were formed, based on New Jersey, New York City, and Albany; these were authorized to consider all problems not soluble in the member-congregations where they arose. Problems resisting solution could then be brought to the Coetus, with the right of appeal to the Classis, of course. All major decisions of the Coetus required the approval of

the Classis. Such was the first judicatory machinery organized in America.[45]

Membership was far from complete; in some cases ministers were willing to join but their Consistories refused (Albany); elsewhere, conservative ministers feared (quite correctly) that the Coetus portended independence. As Dominie Mutzelius of the Tappan church emphasized:

> I am of the opinion that it will be more for an injury and confusion, than for the gain, peace and unity of our Reformed Dutch Church, in case the thing goes on. Time and experience will show; and perhaps there will be a total defection from our dear Netherlandish Church, (which may God forbid!) and then vale, Patria, etc.[46]

Five or six ministers obstinately remained outside the Coetus despite repeated pleas from Amsterdam. Dominie Mutzelius, for instance, was removed from his charge in 1749 for opposing the wishes of his church for membership.

When the first full Coetus met in September, 1748, three young men were waiting to apply for examination, having been trained in America by Goetschius, Dorsius, Frelinghuysen, and others. The liberal members immediately used their new power to ordain in order to fill a few of the many vacant pulpits, confirming the worst fears of the conservatives. The call of one of the three, Benjamin Vanderlinde, to the Ramapo, New Jersey, church was the first which

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[45] ERNY, IV, 2686; 2974ff. See also Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. II, No. 10 (January, 1828), pp. 312-315.

[46] ERNY, IV, 2999.

never went to Amsterdam for prior approval.[47] A fourth applicant was refused ordination because of lack of approval from Amsterdam. These ordinations, of course, did not preclude the general necessity of study, licensing and ordination in the Netherlands, for American ordination was exercised only with Classical consent.

Unfortunately for the authority of the new body, dissension existed in several churches in both Kings and Queens Counties which proved beyond its limited power to settle. Its warnings and pleas were ignored, and it faced the prospect of becoming a nullity before it was fairly established. To refer these problems to Amsterdam meant, at best, long delays; at worst, they constituted an admission that they were incapable of governing themselves. Increasing marriages outside the church raised problems of decreasing membership, and private baptism (i.e., within the home). Rev. Ritzema outlined the problem for his Consistory:

> The close connection by marriage of many of our people with those of other churches. [sic] If they are denied (private) baptism, they threaten to leave our church and go to others. Indeed, their language (English) is ever more natural to our inhabitants and even to the members of our congregation than the Dutch. Going elsewhere is also often done for less reasons.[48]

Amid a welter of correspondence concerning congregational quarrels which refused settlement, clergymen with no

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[47] C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 540.

[48] ERNY, IV, 2971.

credentials, with forged credentials, with irregular ordination, or who ignored the discipline of the Coetus, one hopeful note was sounded in 1751 by Theodorus Frelinghuysen at Albany; he reported that he was about to send three students, two of them his younger brothers Henricus and Ferdinandus, prepared by him in languages, philosophy and theology, to Amsterdam for examination and ordination; churches in New York were already awaiting their return. The young men arrived in the Netherlands, completed their training at Utrecht, were ordained and started their homeward voyage; in June, 1753, both brothers died at sea of smallpox within eight days of each other. When the sad news reached New York, all the troubles compounded from a weak Coetus with a shadow-authority and an impotent but domineering Classis burst their reserves. Sentiment immediately gathered for a bona fide American Classis with power to train and ordain its own ministers and settle its own problems.

In August, 1753, John Frelinghuysen, pastor in the Raritan area which his father (now dead) had served, wrote in anguish to the Classis requesting American ordination for his fourth and youngest brother.[49] When the annual Coetus met in September, the Rev. Gerardus Haeghoort raised the question of placing "the Coetus on a better footing," at

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[49] ERNY, V, 3406 for letter of John and 3423 for letter of Theodorus Frelinghuysen, both to Classis.

its next session.[50] In response, the Assembly "agreed to supply all deficiencies in its constitution which should be intelligently and kindly shown. . . . " (The Coetus Minutes tell us no more.) As the Rev. C. E. Corwin observed, "This proposition can refer to nothing less than the turning of the Coetus into a Classis, and, as is proven by the [later] correspondence, was so understood."[51] Certainly it was so understood by a dissident faction from Kings County which wrote the Classis in November that the Coetus had resolved to end all subordination to Amsterdam. This action also led the New York Consistory to end the use of its chamber for Coetus meetings.

The meetings of the Coetus in September, 1754, opened on a tragic note, with the report of the death of Rev. John Frelinghuysen from smallpox while enroute to the meeting. When the chosen presiding officer, Lambertus De Ronde, failed to appear, Johannes Ritzema was appointed, and the meetings began. Speaking in turn, the delegates immediately considered remedies for the weakness of the Coetus; some proposed only changes which would make it more effective, while others demanded greater transformation. By afternoon of the first day they decided (with "a sufficient unanimity") to change the Coetus into a Classis (implying also the creation of an academy for training ministers),

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[50] Ibid., 3417.

[51] C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 61.

although its exact form was left to a drafting committee. Two days later, the document was read, approved by a unanimous vote, and signed by the president (Ritzema) and scribe. Before adjourning, they charged President Ritzema with the task of providing all the churches, whether they had ministers or not, with a copy of the plan; they also established a committee of four to receive the sentiments of the churches, requesting an answer by April 1, 1755. "Whereupon the Rev. Assembly, well-contented by reason of the excellent harmony and love which had prevailed, adjourned with thanksgiving and prayer to God."[52]

President Ritzema wasted no time. He prepared the Circular Letter on September 19, the day of adjournment, writing a document that reads like an ecclesiastical declaration of independence.[53] But he also composed a letter to the Classis of Amsterdam detailing the deaths of Boel and Frelinghuysen, the illness of Romeyn, the schism in the Kings County churches, and promising the Minutes of Coetus would be sent in the spring. Of the momentous decision to create an American Classis there was not a word. When the Circular Letter was sent out, probably a fortnight later, inclosed with it was another from the New York Consistory

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[52]See ERNY, V, 3490-3492, for the minutes. See 3493 for the Circular Letter. Two of the committee to receive the reports were ordained in America; the other two in Amsterdam.

[53]Ibid., 3493.

which completely undermined the work of the Coetus--rejecting and ridiculing it as if warning the other churches to have nothing to do with an American Classis. Rev. De Ronde, who had agreed to support the Coetus as part of his call, signed the betrayal. Article II of the second letter read:

> After deliberation, since the Coetus declares itself to be of no use, which we believe also, and have learned more than once by experience, we for good reasons judge that a Classis would be of much less use, and so think it better to abide by the old consistory for the quiet of the congregation, with the privilege in any difficulty of consulting the Classis of Amsterdam.[54]

But it is Article V (included in the Consistory Letter sent to the American churches but not included in the copy sent to Amsterdam) which gives the show away.

> It was resolved to present a petition to the [New York provincial] Assembly requesting liberty to have a Professor of Divinity in the College [newly-forming Kings] for the Low Dutch Church, who shall according to the Constitution of the same, instruct therein freely and without hindrance.[55]

These articles were signed by the "missing" Coetus president, De Ronde. For reasons shortly to appear, the ministers and Consistory of New York, even while playing host to the Coetus, turned against its decision to form an American Classis and opened a breach in the Church which lasted to the eve of the Revolution and threatened the very existence of the Church.

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[54] *Ibid.*, 3495-3496.

[55] *Ibid.*

There were now arrayed against each other all the opposing forces which had been gathering since the arrival of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen in 1720. To the old shibboleths of faction--evangelicalism, doctrinal purity, pietism, formalism--many new terms had been added; but all of them now divided the Dutch Reformed Church into hostile camps on the issue of ending or maintaining subservience to the Netherlands Church. Was the Church in America to grow or stagnate? Was it to remain chiefly the institution of a "national sect," or would it burst its linguistic bonds and reach out to all nationalities? Would it develop in step with the new civilization rising all around it or would it remain tied to an uninformed and ineffectual European church?

The duplicity of Ritzema, De Ronde and the New York Consistory was associated with the rapidly maturing plan to found a college in their province. The great success of the Presbyterian Church during the revivals evoked by the Great Awakening forced it to supply the new adherents with pastors. The Log College was the first answer, but in 1746 the College of New Jersey was established at Princeton, where a more formal theological training was offered. Denominations such as the Anglican and Reformed were greatly handicapped in the contest for souls by their dependence on a European supply of clergymen. Besides, a college conferred prestige on a province, and the New Yorkers were

jealous of their more progressive neighbor. Beginning with a lottery in 1746, the proponents of a college gathered funds which they placed under a board composed of seven Anglicans, two Reformed and one Presbyterian, William Livingston.

As the funds mounted, the issue of whether the projected college should be chartered by the legislature, supported with public funds, and made non-sectarian, or whether it should be an Anglican institution became a matter of bitter debate, adding another layer to existing disputes. The rise of the Livingston family and party was the most important political feature of the 1750's; backed by the big up-river landholders and the dominant Dutch element, they championed presbyterianism (both Scotch and Dutch) and the public supported, non-sectarian college over the De Lancey-Anglican faction.[56]

Into these riled waters plunged Johannes Ritzema, senior pastor in New York City. As the leader of the party favoring the Netherlands connection, he feared that independence for the American Dutch Church would mean loss of English-granted liberties, and he cultivated both civil and Anglican church officials. He was supported in this by his

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[56] David M. Ellis, et al., p. 42. For further political background, see E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of New York (15 vols.; Albany: Weed, Parsons and Co., printers, 1853-1857) Vol. VIII, 148 f. and A. C. Flick, Loyalism in New York During the American Revolution (New York: Columbia University Press, 1901), pp. 16-20.

upper class Consistory, although not by all of his parishioners. Looking to Europe, rather than to the American situation, Ritzema saw the closest similarity between his Church and the Anglican: both were established Churches, both were closely related to the power structure, favored in the province, and extremely conservative. By supporting the Anglican-dominated college he could strike several blows at once: curry favor with the Anglicans, spike the talk of a Dutch institution which had been gathering since the days of Frelinghuysen, and undermine the American Classis faction. As senior pastor, he also was almost certainly assured of a seat on the Board of Trustees. From his busy mind came one more proposal which resulted in a Consistory petition to the legislature, praying for a Chair of Divinity in the college, to be chosen and appointed by the Dutch Church.[57] Ritzema hoped to fill that Chair.

When the drive for college funds faltered, Trinity Church, already with many holdings of City real estate, offered a tract of land providing the college president would always be an Anglican and the Book of Prayer be used in college services. Despite great opposition from the Presbyterians led by William Livingston, Lieutenant Governor De Lancey then pushed the charter through, ostensibly with the support of Dutch legislators happy at the thought of

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[57] ERNY, V, 3501, 3505. The Charter was dated October 31, 1754.

the Divinity Chair. To their chagrin, the provision for the professorship was omitted from the charter signed by De Lancey, probably intentionally; but the great majority of the Dutch Church favoring an American Classis were delighted with the double-cross. The Board of Governors (18 ex officio members and 24 "private gentlemen") contained eight Dutch Reformed members, including Ritzema, but twenty-nine were Episcopalians.[58] Despite the fait accompli, Livingston continued to press for a free college, and even introduced a bill to that end--not with hope of passage but to show how the Dutch had been "hoodwinked."[59]

Meantime, the leaderless Coetus was without a place to meet and receive the Church poll on an American Classis, which was scheduled for April, 1755. At Albany, Theodore Frelinghuysen, who was very unpopular with his anti-Coetus congregation, learned of Ritzema's betrayal at New York

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[58] Ibid., 3517-3518. Henry Barclay, rector of Trinity wrote to Samuel Johnson, first president of Kings College: the Governor " . . . has given us a good majority. . . . There are but eight of the Dutch Church, most of them good men and true. . . . " He meant that they were of the Ritzema faction.

[59] The role of William Livingston in opposing the Anglicans is well-known, but the details are riddled with incorrect statements. For example, Merle Curti, in The Growth of American Thought (3rd ed.; New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1964), p. 106, makes him "a liberal member of the Dutch Reformed Church." Livingston had been a member until about 1750, when he became a Presbyterian. H. Richard Niebuhr, in The Social Sources of Denominationalism (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1957), p. 224, actually refers to Livingston as "William Livingstone, one of the earliest English preachers in that church," obviously confusing him with the Rev. John Henry Livingston.

City. Showing his father's courage, he left his pastorate in mid-winter and descended the Hudson, visiting churches on both sides of the river. He was determined to keep alive the related ideas of an American Classis and an academy in which to train them. His efforts met with both support and rejection; the New York City Consistory refused to commit itself until it had heard from Amsterdam.

By now Ritzema was in an awkward position. If the Coetus was transformed into a classis, and somehow formed an academy, he would be only a minority trustee of an Anglican college, and persona non grata with the majority of his own denomination. At the first meeting of the Kings College trustees, in the spring of 1755, he again proposed a Chair of Divinity for the Dutch Church, and the Lieutenant Governor, in ex officio attendance, approved it immediately. The addition to the charter was effective May 30, 1755, but Ritzema's success was to prove a hollow victory. He had become the talk of the town for his covetousness of the professorate and his opposition to the Coetus. In proposing the charter amendment for his own benefit, as he presumed, he acted without the knowledge or consent of his own Consistory, which now entered a censure in the churchbook.[60] Whatever had prompted the Consistory to support Ritzema in the first attempt, the overwhelming Anglican control of Kings College had soured them on the college and on

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[60] ERNY, V, 3576-3577, 11 August 1755.

Ritzema, and they now blamed him for endangering the rights and liberties of the Church and causing all the strife. He was never put forward for the professorate, and the Chair remained mockingly empty.

The Coetus meeting, set for April, 1755, and called to receive the poll of the churches on a Classis, never met. The journey of Frelinghuysen had elicited several strong letters to Amsterdam, condemning the ideas of an independent Classis and academy. On his own initiative, Theodore Frelinghuysen called a special Coetus[61] meeting to press these issues. Held in New York City between May 27 and 30, 1755, the sessions were attended by thirteen ministers, and by elders representing twenty-one churches. The city pastors, De Ronde and Ritzema were conspicuously absent, and the latter, holding the Coetus Minutes Book, refused to surrender it to what he considered an illegal body. Mancius of Kingston, and two elders, while not hostile to an academy, withdrew from the first session when they failed to carry a proposal rejecting majority vote as a means of settling disputes; they wished to continue referral of non-unanimous settlements to the Classis.

The remaining delegates immediately approved a plan to send a spokesman to the Netherlands to present their

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[61] The minutes simply refer to "a fraternal Conference." ERNY, V, 3546.

ideas and raise money for an academy.[62] Frelinghuysen was unanimously chosen for the task, and his commission, drawn in Latin, was signed by eleven ministers on May 30.[63] They also now assumed all the powers of an American Classis, including ordination and discipline.

On the last day of the session, two young men, Mauritius Goetschius and Henricus Frelinghuysen (the last of the five brothers), requested that the Coetus would appeal to Amsterdam to permit American ordination for them. This was granted, but the petition of a third person to be named as a candidate with the right to preach in English in the Dutch churches was refused. Before adjourning the president and scribe drafted a letter to the Classis on behalf of the two candidates, although the Classis had insisted on no more such applications, and they stressed the needs of the frontier churches. Due to the disruption caused by the French and Indian War, there was no reply from Amsterdam until January, 1757, when the Classis bluntly replied:

> . . . the Classis disapproves of such acts of qualification, and can by no means authorize the Coetus to perform them. This is our answer. We also hope you received our preceding message. We advise you to send

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[62]The German Reformed pastor, Michael Schlatter had collected 32,000 pounds in 1751, from donors in Holland and England.

[63]ERNY, V, 3551-3552. On this same day, Ritzema's second try for a Dutch Chair of Divinity at Kings College was approved by the Council.

> the two young gentlemen over here, in order to satisfy the desires of the Classis. . . .[64]

Two years before, within a day of the Coetus request, the Classis had granted examination to an American, William Jackson, on condition that he would not "cooperate in any plans to promote the erection of an independent Classis or Academy in New York or the neighboring provinces" without Classical consent.[65] The attitude of the Amsterdam Brethren was stiffening without, as yet, having received the vicious letters that were on their way from the opponents of the American Classis and academy.

The Church in America had begun to divide into three groups after the Coetus meeting of September, 1754, and the betrayal by Ritzema. The Coetus party, led by Theodore Frelinghuysen until 1761, strove for the formation of an American Classis with power to educate, ordain and discipline its clergy. They were less concerned with formalism and preached a more emotional and evangelistic religion. They were more attuned to the needs of the frontier, and the voice of the people--a charge levied against Frelinghuysen by his opponents. The Conferentie party, as the conservatives came to be called, adhered strictly to the Amsterdam connection, as represented by purity of doctrine, formalism, and use of the Dutch language. Most of these men were

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[64] *Ibid.*, 3689.

[65] *Ibid.*, 3555.

Dutch-born and trained, and generally older; the point, sometimes made, that scholarship was on their side did little to influence public opinion in their favor.[66] Yet even among these men it was admitted that some form of American organization was necessary.

A third group remained outside both camps, including some who had never belonged to the Coetus. The powerful New York Consistory also fell into this category, although both their pastors, Ritzema and De Ronde, were the fiercest leaders of the Conferentie. In 1758, a number of neutral ministers joined the Conferentie group, on Ritzema's invitation. These pastors considered themselves the true representatives of the Church, held meetings in New York, and bombarded Amsterdam with letters denouncing the Coetus, but did not organize until 1764. Ironically, seeing the Coetus group increase through use of the power to ordain, it had to recognize the need for ministers and the inability of the Netherlands to supply them. Having criticized the Coetus for assuming the right to ordain, they asked, in 1758, for authority to ordain in the name of the Classis of Amsterdam, thus giving the appearance of continuing subservience. Permission was refused since the Classis already had recognized the Coetus in 1747 and did not wish to legalize another

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[66]Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. II, No. 10 (January, 1828), p. 313. C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 65-66.

group. Oddly enough, the Classis at first sent its correspondence only to the Coetus.

The long and bitter schism in the American Church divided clergymen, consistories, congregations and families, and proved beyond settlement for seventeen years (1755-1772). Once again, as in the days of the elder Frelinghuysen, lock-outs closed churches, ministers preached from the church steps and were even assaulted in the pulpit. Indeed, Conferentie members often raised the name of the father in their assaults upon the son. There is the story (probably apocryphal) of two opposing ministers meeting on a narrow New Jersey road, each preferring to turn his carriage about rather than give way to the other.

Many communicants, in disgust, stayed away from church, and large numbers began a trek to the Anglican Church, since the schism appeared beyond solution. In the Second River (Belleville), New Jersey church, the conservative benefactor, Col. Schuyler,[67] who had the right of presentation, shut out the Coetus group which was in the majority. In defiance they held services on the church steps, whereupon the Colonel locked up the building and took his party to the Anglican church in Newark. No wonder the

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[67]Burr, The Anglican Church in New Jersey, p. 233; B. C. Taylor, The Annals of the Classis of Bergen (New York: Board of Publications of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1857), pp. 298-302. Burr uses the name "Peter" while Taylor uses "John" Schuyler.

Classis, swamped with complaints from both factions, asked in despair:

> What man is able, however attentive and active he may be, to write to every individual in particular, where so many heads, so many meetings, so many quarrels and disturbances exist? And would it be conducive to peace and quiet?[68]

Although the two factions were more nearly balanced in numbers during the early years of the conflict, the Coetus was always in the majority and its numbers increased the gap as they ordained at least five ministers between 1754 and 1758, and were supported by public opinion. Peace overtures by the Conferentie in 1757, 1758 and 1760 were fruitless because of demands with which the Coetus could not comply. An extensive pamphlet war immediately resulted, with Ritzema for the Conferentie and Leydt of New Brunswick as the chief scribes.

During all this time, Theodore Frelinghuysen remained in Albany, unable to carry out the commission granted in 1755 to secure authorization from Classis for an American judicatory and academy. His church opposed such a move, and denied him leave.[69] Four years later the way was cleared, under great pressure from the Coetus, and he sailed for the Netherlands in October of 1759, barely having time to write his wife, and apparently not having time to complete a

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[68] ERNY, V, 3698.

[69] Ibid., 3599.

will.[70] Little is known of his activities in the Netherlands, except that he informed the Classis of Amsterdam that the Coetus no longer wished to be under its jurisdiction. Unsuccessful in his mission, he embarked for America in 1761, only to disappear in the course of the voyage.[71]

Samuel Verbryck, pastor of the Tappan church, now emerged as the leader of the Coetus group. Pressing the effort for an American academy, he petitioned three successive governors between 1761 and 1766 to charter a Reformed institution. Failing in his initial attempt, he tried to secure a Chair of Theology at Presbyterian Princeton for the Dutch, without success.[72] About the same time, Jacob R. Hardenbergh, who had studied under John Frelinghuysen and married his widow, sailed for the Netherlands, where he arrived after the departure of Theodore Frelinghuysen. As the first American-ordained minister to visit Holland, he proved an excellent "point of contact" between the American and European churches, so that upon his return in 1763 he

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[70] Ibid., 3738-3739.

[71] For a strange account of Frelinghuysen's unpopularity in Albany, and death at sea with loud hint of suicide, see excerpt from Mrs. Grant's (Anne McVicar's) Memoirs of an American Lady, New York, 1846, given in ERNY, V, 3739-3744. This marks the death of the last surviving son of Theodore Jacobus Frelinghuysen.

[72] In 1762, the Coetus sent a delegate to the German Coetus to ask cooperation in founding a seminary, but that group replied that they did not feel authorized to act independently of the Classis of Amsterdam. E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 582.

was able to present clearly the sentiments of Classis and Synod. Although he brought no commitments, he reported that many in Holland did not support the Conferentie position; that two Utrecht professors even approved the creation of an American academy.

The Conferentie party called another conference in June, 1764, at which representatives of the German Reformed Church were present. Both factions were unyielding in their positions. The Coetus now argued for American ordination both from expediency and from Biblical sanction, and they also borrowed a political argument which their opponents had long used against them: that as subjects of Britain they could not acknowledge subjection to a foreign power. Therefore the Dutch Church in America had a right to its independence since the civil government of the Netherlands could not enforce decrees of the State Church. With this stand, there was nothing to do but adjourn.

At this point, the Conferentie ministers formally organized as "An Assembly subordinate to the Reverend Classis" on October 8, 1765, drawing a constitution based on that of the original Coetus. Although this body ordained one minister, and their existence was recognized in Amsterdam, they were lagging far behind the Coetus in numbers, and in their bitterness committed many senseless acts. Much of their spite was vented on the hapless Hermanus Meyer, the German-born pastor of the rabidly Conferentie

congregation at Kingston. His evangelistic preaching displeased them, to begin with, and matters came to a head in 1764 when civil authorities forced him to take the oath of allegiance to Great Britain, renouncing subjection to any other civil or ecclesiastical power. The issue quickly involved the full factional forces, with the Coetus supporting Meyer and exploiting the implication that the Conferentie ministers were disloyal to Britain. When poor Meyer brought home a bride from a Coetus family, the Conferentie could stand it no longer; they sent up a trio to investigate and deposed the pastor, using illegally a power which belonged only to the Classis which they claimed to support. The Coetus propaganda produced a favorable attitude among the English while placing the Conferentie under a cloud.[73] One also suspects an English hand in the game: the day after Meyer was deposed, one of the three investigators was himself forced to take the oath, on penalty of a 50 pound fine.

In the frenzy of their declining power, the Conferentie appealed to the Classis to strike the names of the Coetus pastors from the rolls in Amsterdam, and even suggested a petition to George III to suppress the Coetus entirely. Ritzema's great fear was that if the ecclesiastical tie to the Netherlands was broken, the Reformed Church would lose its favored status and merely be tolerated like any

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[73]C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 425, contains a brief biographical sketch of Meyer, and some details.

other dissenting group. No longer hoping to fill the Chair of Divinity at Kings, he began to propose that a properly qualified professor be sent from the Netherlands. But it was all too late.

In 1766, the perseverance of Samuel Verbryck was rewarded when Governor William Franklin of New Jersey granted a charter for Queens College, thus fulfilling the hopes expressed by Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen and the efforts made by his sons.[74] Although for the next five years there was little but the charter and the trustees' meetings--there were no buildings, students or faculty--taken with other current happenings, it was enough to bring the demise of the Conferentie party. At their spring meeting in May, 1767, only four ministers and three elders appeared, while their last meeting, in the autumn, brought eight clergymen and six elders to the funeral. Without any bargaining power, they once more offered peace on their own terms to a Coetus jubilant over its college charter, and were spurned. Decorating their report to Amsterdam with scornful jibes at the new college, they ended their last formal meeting.

Meanwhile, another great victory for the liberals--a break-through on the linguistic front--had taken place in New York City. After 1664, Dutch conservatives considered

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[74]George P. Schmidt, Princeton and Rutgers,--the Two Colonial Colleges of New Jersey, Vol. V of the New Jersey Historical Series (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1964), p. 6.

their language to be a principle guarantee of their religion and nationality, but they were unable to pursue a reclusive course, despite the exhortations of their clergy, because of their declining ratio to the English population, the use of English in commerce and the courts, and the political, social and cultural attractions of the ruling British. The inter-denominational aspects of the Awakening also undermined their language, and led to unsuccessful attempts to re-vivify the Dutch church-schools. Although most Dutch were probably bi-lingual to some extent, the appeal of the English language was greatest in the lower counties, where the English were concentrated; the farther the distance from New York City, the more tenacious was the language. The result in a bi-lingual community without proper schools was a bastardization of both languages used by the Dutch. When Rev. Hermanus Boel entered his pastorate on Long Island in 1766, his Dutch was so pure that he was scarcely intelligible to his congregation, so accustomed were they to a mixture of corrupted Dutch and English.

The movement for the adoption of regular English preaching originated and triumphed in the New York City area. We can only hint at the many modifications which took place. In 1730, a group led by David Abeel petitioned prematurely for English preaching. Peter Kalm observed in 1748:

> most of the young people now speak principally English, go only to the English church, and would

> even take it amiss if they were called Dutchmen and not English.[75]

Six years later, in attacking the Kings College charter, William Livingston repeatedly described the decay of the Dutch Church because of the loss of the young people, and predicted an early disappearance of both Church and language if English was not introduced.[76]

As early as 1761, a group of young people petitioned the New York Consistory for English services, and the following year Jacobus Roosevelt and Philip Livingston, backed by many members repeated the request. Despite the vehement protests of the die-hards, who immediately started a law suit, the Consistory decided, on July 12, 1762, to call a permanent, English-speaking pastor. Another group of malcontents went over to the Anglican church in a body, muttering "If we have to go English, let's go all the way." Surprisingly, the Classis of Amsterdam (in the middle of the Coetus-Conferentie dispute) came to the support of the Consistory, observing that the gospel was more important than the language.

The Consistory had adopted a neutral position in the dispute; it now decided to indicate its loyalty to the Church by calling not merely an English-speaking pastor, but to call one through the Classis of Amsterdam. The choice fell

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[75] Kalm, I, 142.

[76] ERNY, V, 3459, passim.

on the Rev. Archibald Laidlie, Scottish pastor of the English church at Flushing, in the province of Zeeland. Accepting the call in November, 1763, he arrived in New York the following March, and preached his first sermon two weeks later, on April 15. The church was crowded with the curious; directly below him sat the mayor and aldermen. To initiate permanent English-preaching in the Dutch church he chose as his text II Corinthians, 5, xi: "Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."[77]

Laidlie was highly successful from the first. As a new-comer, he diplomatically refused to side with either faction. The young people flocked back to the Reformed fold, filling the churches. A messy law suit, begun before his arrival and designed to prevent English-preaching, was thrown out for lack of jurisdiction and the plaintiffs charged with the costs. Only three years after Laidlie's arrival, the Consistory began to look around for a second English-speaking pastor, although De Ronde and Ritzema continued to serve the dwindling number of Dutch-speaking parishioners.

With the virtual creation of an American Classis by the Coetus party, a college charter secured, and the introduction of English preaching, the Coetus party was nearing its goals, but there seemed no way to end the strife of which both factions were weary. Unsensed, a way was opening. In

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[77]Gunn, p. 104.

May, 1766, John Henry Livingston embarked for the Netherlands to prepare for the ministry.[78] This slight youth of twenty was destined to be the last candidate to be sent to Europe for training, but a greater distinction awaited him; he was to be the chief instrument for re-uniting the factions.

During the year before he sailed, Livingston resided in New York City and became a friend and admirer of the new minister, Laidlie. Through him he became thoroughly acquainted with the problems of the Church, and he developed the conviction that his own mission was to bring peace to the divided Church. While in Europe, Livingston busied himself with much more than his studies. He kept informed about the American Church through correspondence--especially with Abraham Lott, an elder in the New York church. He met often with Dr. John Witherspoon, then touring Europe before taking up the presidency of Princeton College. And he conversed with members of the Classis of Amsterdam and the Synod of North Holland. Out of these exchanges there developed a plan of union which was approved by the Classis in June, 1768. Although it was rejected by the Conferentie and coolly received by the Coetus, it became the basis for a settlement three years later. The principle barrier to acceptance was a proposed close attachment to Princeton

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[78] Ibid., is the only full biography of Livingston. A short biographical sketch is to be found in C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 398-401.

College. All but one Conferentie minister opposed this; Ritzema used the occasion to make a last futile attempt to secure the vacant Chair at Kings. The Coetus camp, with a charter for Queens College already in hand, secured a second charter in 1770 which granted them greater authority, and provided that the president should be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church.

In the meantime, the third Dutch church in New York City was nearing completion. Some of the Consistory wished to call Livingston immediately; others wished to hear him preach first, fearing his voice might be too weak. A petition with more than a hundred signatures, urging Livingston's appointment as a second English pastor, led to his call in April, 1769. After remaining in the Netherlands for another year to secure his Doctorate, he returned to New York in September, 1770, preached his first sermon on the 10th, and was acknowledged by his colleagues and the Consistory as their pastor.

After only a short interval, he turned optimistically to the problem of the schism, in no way bound to either faction, and was aided greatly by his family and social connections. Conversing with individuals from both factions, he sought to discover their sentiments and to implant ideas, and when he had become convinced that his proposals would meet with a favorable response, he asked the neutral Consistory of New York City to call the convention

which met on October 15, 1771. Thirty-four churches responded, and twenty-two ministers were present.[79]

Livingston welcomed the delegates, and not surprisingly, was chosen to preside. Immediately a committee of twelve was selected, comprised of four Coetus, four Conferentie and four neutral members, and Livingston discussed with them the Plan of Union as it had been approved in Holland. After a careful examination and with only a few modifications, the committee referred it to the whole convention which also adopted it with slight changes.

A reading of the thirty-nine articles of the Union (arranged under three headings) reveals that a sort of half-way house on the road to independence was erected. The first article pledged adherence to the constitution of the Netherlands Reformed Church as established in the Church Orders of the Synod of Dort. The highest authority in America was to rest with a "General Body" which had power to ordain. The provision read:

> We assume the long-wished-for right of examining candidates for licensure and for the ministry; and also further to qualify those who are lawfully called, as the same is practiced in the Netherlands.

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[79]For a brief account, see C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 69-72. For more detail, Gunn, pp. 197-204; 221-240, and The Acts and Proceedings of the General Synod of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in North America, Vol. I, 1771-1812; Preceded by the Minutes of the Coetus (1738-1754) and the Proceedings of the Conferentie (1755-1767) and followed by the Minutes of the Original Particular Synod (1794-1799) (New York: Board of Publications of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1859), pp. 5-10. Hereafter cited as Acts and Proceedings.

A list of those examined, ordained or removed was to be kept and reported to the Netherlands. All problems which the Particular Bodies (there were five of these, intermediate to the General Body and the congregations) could not solve were to receive final decision in the General Body, but appeals over doctrine were to be carried to the Classis of Amsterdam or the Synod of North Holland.

With regard to education for the ministry, one or two professors were to be called from the Netherlands, and none were to have any connection with English-speaking institutions (i.e., Kings and Princeton). However, until this system could be put into effect, those students who had been studying with ministers were to be examined by the General Body. Finally, the Plan of Union was not obligatory upon the signers until ratified by the congregations and the Classis of Amsterdam.

The Plan was immediately sent out, and provisions were made to meet again in New York in June of 1772. In the interval, Ritzema, who had not attended the peace conference, attempted to make trouble but was cooled off by admonitions from Amsterdam, which gave its approval to the Plan on January 14, 1772. On the whole, the ratification of the Plan by each church proceeded smoothly, and when the convention re-convened in June, it was quickly declared adopted. The old conservative warrior, Ritzema, now capitulated, and his signature stands first on the ratified

Articles. Although a few ministers remained outside the organization, some of them entered the union over the next few years. The long schism was ended.

Statistics for the Colonial Period are notoriously unreliable, as a wealth of estimates and approximations have shown. Nevertheless they can be used to illustrate, rather loosely, the growth of the Dutch Reformed Church and its position relative to the other Churches. It is necessary to remember, however, that the Reformed Church was confined to only four provinces--and chiefly within two, while other denominations were generally more extensive, geographically.

Richard B. Morris presented the church memberships of 1775 in the following order: Congregational, 575,000; Anglican, 500,000; Presbyterian, 410,000; Dutch Reformed, 75,000.[80] But since he also states that there were more than 75,000 German Lutherans in Pennsylvania alone, that denomination must have outnumbered the Dutch Reformed. Edwin S. Gaustad set the number of Dutch Reformed at 120,000 in 1770 and about 125,000 in 1775.[81] The Church

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[80]Richard B. Morris, ed., Encyclopedia of American History (2 vols.: New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953), II, 550.

[81]Edwin S. Gaustad, Historical Atlas of Religion in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 28. Figure 21 shows statistics for both the German and Dutch Reformed Churches.

itself has no figures available until well into the nineteenth century.[82]

Another method of comparison is by using the number of churches and ministers. While this device has some validity, it can also be deceptive, and like the other methods has produced much disagreement. Edward F. Humphrey ranked the Churches at the start of the Revolution as follows:[83]

Denomination	Ministers	Churches
Congregational	575	720
Baptists	424	471
Episcopalian	250	300
Presbyterian	177	417
Dutch Reformed	30	82
Lutheran	25	60

William W. Sweet listed his denominational figures by number of churches in this order: Congregational, 658; Presbyterian, 543; Baptists, 498; Anglican, 480; Quakers, 295; Lutherans, 151. He simply lumped the Dutch and German Reformed Churches for a total of 251.[84]

Still another interesting statistical variant is provided by Augustus Shearer's congregational figures for New York alone. Here, the Dutch Reformed led with 81; the

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[82]E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 628. Although the churches were asked to report their statistics as early as 1797, the request was repeated in 1809 and 1812; as late as 1829 the Synod complained that some churches had made no returns, and many others had made only a partial report.

[83]Edward F. Humphrey, Nationalism and Religion in America, 1774-1789 (New York: Russell and Russell, 1965), p. 13.

[84]Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 251.

others, in order, were Presbyterian, 61; Episcopal, 30; Quaker, 26; Lutheran, 22; Baptist, 16; and Congregationalist, 5.[85]

The records of the Dutch Reformed Church itself supply the most accurate figures for the numbers of its pastors and congregations, but limitations of reliability apply here also. The Rev. Edward T. Corwin, the Church's finest historian, indicated that there were 41 pastors and 100 churches in 1772; these had increased to 44 and 105 respectively by 1775.[86] Comparative figures for the whole colonial period are more doubtful. Corwin supplies lists of both pastors and congregations for the period 1628-1775, but includes at least fifteen French and German Reformed Ministers who were affiliated with the Dutch Church in varying degrees. If these are subtracted, the total of clergymen wholly connected with the Dutch is about ninety. The more recent but questionable figures of Frederick Weis do not tally well with Corwin's. Weis' tables give 120 pastors serving the 126 congregations established in the course of the colonial era; the breakdown by provinces shows

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[85] David M. Ellis, et al., p. 67. No source is given for Shearer's figures.

[86] E. T. Corwin, "The Character and Development of the Reformed Church in the Colonial Period," in Centennial Discourses, pp. 102-106.

80 in New York, 34 in New Jersey, 11 in Pennsylvania, and 1 in Delaware.[87]

Because Weis consolidates all figures for pastors in the Middle and Southern colonies, it is useless to pursue denominational comparisons, with one exception. The figures given for the German Reformed Church indicate the effect of continuing migration; after 1664 the Dutch failed to secure any appreciable increase from that source. Applying his statistics for only New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, the German Reformed Church by 1775 had 159 congregations; ministerial figures for that year are not known, but by that time 112 had served the German Reformed churches.

Church and secular historians have raised theoretical questions related to the development of the Dutch Church prior to the Revolution. Essentially they are concerned with two issues. If the Church had responded to the challenge of the senior Frelinghuysen during the 1720's, would it have gained a pre-emptive position among the frontier religious and played a greater role in American ecclesiastical history? And if the schism had come a generation earlier, with an earlier settlement (as was the case with the Presbyterians), would the results of the Revolution have been less destructive? There are no answers

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[87]Frederick L. Weis, The Colonial Churches and the Colonial Clergy of the Middle and Southern Colonies, 1607-1776 (Lancaster, Mass.: Published by the Society of the Descendants of the Colonial Clergy, 1938), pp. 17-18.

to these purely academic problems, but if one cares to speculate further, the clues lie in the long-continued and unique relationship with the Netherlands Church.

The success of the evangelical party in securing for the American Church a limited autonomy with respect to language, organization, education and ordination probably "saved the Dutch Church from extinction,"[88] as Sweet and others have suggested. Beginning with Frelinghuysen in 1720 many men contributed to the gradual achievement of this victory. In the dozen years before the Revolution two new and capable leaders joined the older Jacob R. Hardenbergh to provide excellent leadership. Alexander Laidlie revitalized the Collegiate church in the City, not only by his English-language preaching but also by taking an active part in civic and political affairs. John H. Livingston supplied a statesmanship that was both conservative and forward-looking. Unfortunately, the brief period between the re-union and the outbreak of hostilities was insufficient for the Church and its leaders to prepare adequately for the disruption which followed.

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[88]Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 214.

CHAPTER IV

THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA, 1772-1783

With factions united and peace restored, the Dutch Reformed Church turned hopefully to other business, some of it long delayed by the schism. In part, these activities indicated a greater independence from the Netherlands, but they also revealed areas of continuing relationship. The weaknesses inherent in a compromise settlement left many members who were dissatisfied or suspicious, especially in the old Conferentie camp.

The new American ecclesiastical machinery was set in motion immediately, with sixty-two congregations subscribing to the Articles of Union in October, 1772.[1] A substantial minority of at least fifteen separatist churches preferred to nurse their grudges, and refused to come under the jurisdiction of the new General and Particular Bodies.[2] In

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[1]Letter of John J. Livingston to unknown addressee, dated 26 June 1772, Emmet Collection #2592, New York Public Library. No additional signatures were added down to the October meeting of the General Body. ERNY, VI, 4258.

[2]E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 476. These churches were

conformity with the Articles, the Rev. John H. Livingston agreed to make a survey of the ministers, licentiates and vacant congregations, both in New York and New Jersey, and to forward it to the Classis of Amsterdam for inclusion in the annual Register of the Dutch Reformed Church. As it turned out, no more ministers were called from the Netherlands.[3]

The American churches also felt obliged to make provision, after the pattern of the Dutch churches, for the care of ministers' widows and orphans. When delegates from the New York City and Kingston Classes urged this matter before the General Body in 1773, Dr. Livingston was further charged with drafting a plan for such a fund. Although he reported some progress in 1774, it was not until the following year that he presented a plan which involved securing a royal charter.[4] The plan was approved by the General Body, applications were filed with the provincial governments of both New York and New Jersey, and forwarded to England, but

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referred to as "out-standing," and included both Albany and Kingston. This situation did not end until 1794.

[3]ERNY, VI, 4279, 4183. I have found no such listing prior to 1784, when a post-war survey was made, showing ministers, congregations, and out-standing churches.

[4]E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 800. For a reference to this charter see Bernard Mason, The Road to Independence: The Revolutionary Movement in New York, 1773-1777 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966), p. 50.

the intervention of the Revolution ended all further consideration of the matter until 1787.[5]

Of much greater importance to the future of the Church were its educational institutions--Queen's College and the Professorship of Theology. Queen's College, despite jealous contention from the villages of Tappan (New York) and Hackensack, was awarded to New Brunswick largely because, in those impecunious days, its citizens pledged a greater subscription fund to support the college.[6] Here, on the second Tuesday in November, 1771, the school began a shaky existence with Frederick Frelinghuysen, fresh from the College of New Jersey, as the sole instructor.[7] Three years later, the first commencement exercises were held at New Brunswick in October, 1774, with the Rev. Jacob R. Hardenbergh, pastor of the near-by church of Raritan, presiding.[8] The single graduate, Matthew Leydt, with the stage

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[5] ERNY, VI, 4287.

[6] William H. S. Demarest, A History of Rutgers College, 1766-1924 (New Brunswick: Rutgers College, 1924), pp. 89-90. Unfortunately, the Minutes of the Board of Trustees for the years 1771-1782 are missing.

[7] However, another instructor was added sometime during the first year. See ERNY, VI, 4256.

[8] Hardenbergh was a member of the Board of Trustees, probably its secretary, and possibly acting as president pro tem of the college. He was named to the presidency officially in 1786, in recognition of his strenuous labors to establish and maintain the school. He had married the widow of Rev. John Frelinghuysen (son of Theodorus Jacobus). Frederick Frelinghuysen was the son of Rev. John Frelinghuysen, and therefore a step-son of Hardenbergh, and grandson of the first Frelinghuysen.

to himself, achieved something of a tour-de-force by presenting speeches in Latin, English and Dutch, and was rewarded with high applause. In the "very numerous and respectable assembly" sat the five members of the next class.[9]

During these same years the highest American ecclesiastical unit, the General Body, made an unsuccessful attempt to secure a suitable professor of theology for the Church.[10] The Conferentie Party had opposed an American college, and then, once the secular institution was secured by the Coetus Party, had objected to combining theological training with the new institution because it feared dilution if not subversion of doctrinal purity. Therefore, the Articles of Union had provided for a professor who would teach divinity students in his own home and supplement this income by serving as a part-time pastor. The General Body, without funds, decided in 1772 to postpone consideration of this matter for a year in order to permit the clergy to

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[9]For various accounts or references, see the following: W. H. S. Demarest, Rutgers; J. H. Raven, "The Church and Institutions in New Brunswick," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 240; C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 108-110. All seem to be based on notices in the New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, Oct. 24, 1774 and the New York Journal or the General Advertiser, Nov. 3, 1774. There were not more than thirty students at Queens in the whole period 1771-1781, while, at the start of the Revolution, Harvard and Yale had about 150 each, and the College of New Jersey about 100.

[10]At the same time, there was nothing in the charter of Queens to prevent the Trustees from establishing their own Chair of Theology.

foster favorable local sentiment, both for the professorate and its financial support.[11]

Meanwhile, the Trustees of Queen's, having raised about four thousand pounds (ten thousand dollars) in subscriptions, acted upon the terms of their liberal second charter (1770) which permitted them to combine in one person the presidency of their infant institution and a Professorate of Theology. Following the example of the Presbyterians at Princeton, who had called Witherspoon from Scotland in 1768, the Trustees offered the dual position to the Rev. John Brown of Haddington, Scotland, who declined the call.[12] The Trustees then turned to the Classis of Amsterdam and the Theological Faculty of the University of Utrecht and asked them to recommend a qualified person to fill both positions.

The request, dated December 30, 1772, was sent from the New Jersey village of Raritan, and signed by a committee of four Trustees, headed by the Rev. Jacob R. Hardenbergh.[13] Acting after the annual meeting of the General Body in October, the Committee was unable to inform that

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[11] ERNY, VI, 4253. Meantime, students with the proper education could receive theological training in the parsonages at New York, Albany, Fishkill, Raritan and Hackensack.

[12] Centennial of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Church in America, 1784-1884 (New York: Board of Publications of the Reformed Church in America, 1885), pp. 79-83. Hereafter cited as Centennial Memorial.

[13] For an abstract of the letter and the list of ten qualifications required, see ERNY, VI, 4256-4257 and 4274.

organization of its action, whether by design or otherwise. It is hard to escape the conclusion that they were acutely aware of tender or unhealed wounds still existing from the schism. Three of these men were ministers, the fourth was an elder in the church of one of them; all, as enthusiastic supporters of the college, were members of the Coetus Party; and all were from New Jersey. Their action was an extremely clever method of dispelling--or at least allaying--the fears of the Conferentie die-hards that American institutions meant the end of the Netherlands connection or of orthodoxy, while at the same time enhancing the position of the college. In one stroke they would, if successful, court the favor of Amsterdam, provide a theological professor, and secure the support of all who were of Dutch descent.[14] For although the Articles of Union forbade combination of the Church's professorate with the college, there was nothing in the secular charter of the school to prevent such a combination as they now contemplated.

The first reaction of the mystified Classis of Amsterdam was strongly unfavorable to the unexpected request. The Classical Secretary (R. A. Ten Brink) wrote to the Rev. Franciscus Burmannis, professor at Utrecht:

> . . . the letters from New Jersey concerning the professorate, received both by yourself and us, appear very objectionable to our Classis.

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[14]W. H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 94.

> The letters did not come from the General Body of New York and New Jersey, nor are they in harmony with the Articles of Union. . . . In this view, the Classis cannot as yet interfere in this matter, lest the way be opened to renewed disturbances and divisions between New York and New Jersey.[15]

Precisely at this time (October 5-8, 1773) the General Body was meeting in Kingston, New York. To inform the Body of the advances made to Amsterdam and Utrecht, the Trustees of Queen's submitted a copy of their letter along with a "respectful address." Contrary to the impressions prevailing in the Netherlands, accord was so far restored in the American Church that, for a brief moment at least, it seemed as if the fortunes of Church and College would merge. The idea of uniting the Presidency and the Professorate was not only well-received, but endorsed--subject, however, to severe limitations. The Trustees were to call no person to these offices without the recommendation of the Classis of Amsterdam and the approval of the General Body. The rank of Professor (of Theology) was to be superior to that of President. For its part, the Church would use its influence to raise funds to supplement the ten thousand dollars already raised by the Trustees. Any contributions from New York churches were to be sequestered in the control of designated churches, and revert to the bodies named, if the College hired theological professors other than "those

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[15] ERNY, VI, 4271 (October 6, 1773).

of the Dutch Reformed Church, in fellowship with the Church of the Netherlands."[16]

At the end of its session, the General Body notified the Classis of Amsterdam of its approval of the plan, adducing six reasons. With a suspiciously covetous eye on the money already raised for the College, the Body emphasized especially the economies both to the Church and to the divinity students ("who as a general thing are not wealthy") which would result from combining theological and secular education in the small town of New Brunswick, where living costs were far less than in New York City. While lack of finances forced the General Body to accept the plan, the continued animosity caused by the schism was closely related. Many important congregations in New York refused to contribute to a separate professorship, and the support of the New Jersey churches was absolutely necessary to the project. Hence, the compromised decision.[17]

The Dutch correspondents in Amsterdam and Utrecht refused to act until they had received clarification of the terms of the request and an endorsement from the General Body. The Minutes of the General Body were received in Amsterdam on April 11, 1774, and produced a serious exchange of letters between Amsterdam and Utrecht, which led only to pleas for more information about what the Americans proposed

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[16] ERNY, VI, 4269.

[17] Ibid., 4269-70.

to offer by way of salary, transportation costs and housing.[18] Nevertheless, the Theological Faculty at Utrecht, acting through Professor G. Bonnet, put forward the name of John Henry Livingston, suggesting to Amsterdam that he would be acceptable in New York and should be invited to the dual office.[19] When the General Body met in October, 1774, they had nothing to report except their high hopes of a momentary reply. Provision was even made for an extraordinary meeting to consider the nomination from the Netherlands when it should arrive.

Finally, in January of 1775, the General Body received messages from the Classis of Amsterdam and the Theological Faculty of Utrecht, and accordingly, called a special session to meet in April to consider the recommendations from the Netherlands. Here, instead of the name of some Dutch theologian as they had requested, they heard the official nomination of Dr. Livingston, whom the Classis of Amsterdam had informally proposed the previous year.[20] The letter of recommendation, forwarded from Utrecht through Amsterdam, was signed by the Rev. Gisbertus Bonnet, whom the

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[18] Centennial Memorial, pp. 348-349. Letter from Classis of Amsterdam to General Body of New York and New Jersey, 15 June 1774.

[19] ERNY, VI, 4280.

[20] Ibid., 4278.

Trustees perhaps had hoped to attract to America.[21] He wrote:

> . . . Dr. Livingston must be regarded above all others as best adapted for the Professorship in New York and New Jersey, on account of his qualifications for the office, his peculiar acquaintance with the languages, names and peculiar circumstances of the country . . . which all must be taken into account. In these he must greatly excel anyone who might be called from here, though superior in learning.[22]

But other forces were already at work to thwart these plans so hopefully initiated in 1772, and to defer their achievement for a decade. The assembly had met on April 25, 1775. Two days earlier, on Sunday, April 23, news of the battle of Lexington arrived in New York. The members of the General Body reflected this unsettling atmosphere. Although they expressed appreciation to the Faculty at Utrecht and the Classis of Amsterdam for their labors, they deferred any positive action on the Professorate "in view of its importance, especially as relates to the distant future of our country. . . . " They organized themselves into a standing committee with authority to summon a meeting of representatives of <u>all</u> the denomination's churches on October 5, to meet simultaneously with the next General Body, "providing in their judgment the state of the times and other circumstances permit." The purpose of the meeting would be "to participate in measures to raise a sufficient

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[21]William H. S. Demarest, <u>Rutgers</u>, p. 96.

[22]<u>Centennial Memorial</u>, Appendix, p. 348, note 22.

fund for the calling of a professor,"[23] without permitting debate on what already had been done. Then, setting May 7, 1775, as a denominational day of humiliation, fasting and prayer, they adjourned rather hurriedly.

When the General Body assembled in October, the colonies were already far along the path to revolution and war. With regard to the Professorate, which they had met to consider, they sadly noted in their Minutes: "By reason of the pitiable condition of our land, the consideration of the subject of the professorate is deferred."[24] When the subject was resumed, in 1784, the College and the Church went their separate ways.

Thus the Church had barely begun to convalesce from wounds of a long-standing schism and to build new foundations before another extended period of calamity occurred, and threatened it once more with destruction. The outbreak of hostilities in 1775 halted all progress in church affairs, and the transfer of the theater of war to New York and New Jersey in 1776 disrupted the Church completely, scattering its members and destroying or appropriating its property.

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[23] ERNY, VI, 4286.

[24] William J. R. Taylor, "The Peculiar History of the Reformed Church in America in Relation to Theological Education," in Centennial Discourses, p. 190. Also, C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 72.

While producing great damage and dislocation, the next eight years of tribulation also carried the Reformed Church several steps nearer to complete independence. Most important, the ethnic isolation of the Dutch in language and religion eroded as their routine patterns were broken by flight and by participation in a common cause. As a result, the Reformed Church and its adherents entered more fully into the political, social and religious currents of American life. Second, all educational and institutional development was suspended. Third, the communications with the Netherlands Church, as agreed upon and maintained under the Articles of Union, were reduced to sporadic exchanges, with one hiatus of five years (1776-1780). Fourth, the Declaration of Independence, the New Jersey Constitution of 1776 and the New York Constitution of 1777 ended the chartered and favored position established under the British; as a result, the Church became merely one among many religious bodies, all equal in status.

While all denominations suffered from the war in the Middle Colonies, those Churches with a presbyterian polity were the particular objects of hatred and persecution by the British. The brunt fell upon the Presbyterian and Dutch Reformed denominations because of the Tory conviction that ecclesiastical republicanism nourished political republicanism--which was an anathema to those who supported the Crown, the Church of England, and the established social

order. The long record of presbyterian agitation against the Anglican episcopate and their opposition to Anglican control of King's College were additional sources of animosity.[25] Leaving aside the complications of factional politics and commercial rivalries in New York, one more factor contributed to the English hatred of the Dutch--that of past disloyalty. During the French and Indian War the Dutch Reformed traders of Albany were charged with carrying on "business as usual" with the French in Canada.[26] This animosity carried over into the religious sphere, and although the Dutch Church was much smaller in numbers than the Presbyterian, it suffered disproportionately.[27]

By coincidence, the campaigns mounted by the British in 1776 and 1777 occurred in precisely the areas of New York and New Jersey where the Reformed Church was concentrated, and provided a fine opportunity for harassment. Moreover,

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[25]For a discussion, see William W. Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840 (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), chapter i, "Religion in the Revolutionary Generation," pp. 1-32, but especially the section "Congregationalists and Presbyterians," pp. 3-13. The Congregationalists, although republican in sentiment, were relatively weak in New York at the start of the Revolution, having only five churches there. David M. Ellis, et al., p. 67.

[26]See Kalm, I, pp. 345-346 for the Dutch-English hatred in the Albany area.

[27]The Presbyterians were not only the largest denomination in the Middle Colonies, but also had the best inter-colonial organization on the American continent at the start of the Revolution. See Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, pp. 5-6.

the marine outlet for the entire region, New York City, was occupied by the British from September 15, 1776 until November 25, 1783. This interrupted European communications between the Netherlands and American Churches and also scattered the oldest and largest congregations and the strongest leaders, who might have given firmer direction to Church affairs.

The majority of the Dutch Church were undoubtedly Whiggish in their sentiments, but the degree of unanimity varied greatly from county to county in both New York and New Jersey. In general, the greater the distance from New York City, the more Tory support declined. The predominantly Dutch population of sprawling Albany County, which spanned the upper Hudson, was almost solidly Whig. On the west bank of the Hudson to the South, Ulster County enjoyed a similar reputation;[28] its chief town, Kingston, became a patriotic center and the site of the state constitutional convention in 1777 (paying dearly for the honor when a British bombardment reduced the town to rubble later in the year). On the east bank of the middle Hudson, Columbia and Dutchess Counties were less thoroughly devoted to the patriot cause.

In the heavily Anglified lower counties of New York, great divisions occurred among the Dutch. British

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[28]Ernest Wilder Spaulding, His Excellency George Clinton (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1938), p. 47.

sympathizers or neutralists were extremely numerous in the Long Island churches of Kings and Queens Counties, on Staten Island (Richmond County), and on Manhattan where New York City had a large complement of Dutch Tories.[29] Across the Hudson, in Bergen County, New Jersey, the Dutch congregations were bitterly divided, and participated in some of the most vicious bush-whacking guerilla warfare. This was true to a lesser degree for Somerset and Monmouth Counties. The choosing of sides in these Dutch congregations was not a little influenced by the lingering rancor of old discontents, especially the Coetus-Conferentie controversy. In New York the tendency to divide along these lines was noticed by Lieutenant Governor Colden as early as 1770; he wrote the Colonial Secretary, Lord Hillsborough: "The friends of the administration are of the Church of England, the Lutherans, and the old Dutch congregation. . . . "[30] In New Jersey the former Conservative-Conferentie faction was predominantly

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[29]For excellent background but somewhat differing conclusions, these three books offer up-to-date research on the issues over which Americans divided: North Callahan, Royal Raiders: The Tories of the American Revolution (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1963); Bernard Mason, The Road to Independence: The Revolutionary Movement in New York, 1733-1777; and William Nelson, The American Tory (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1961).

[30]Thomas Jones, History of New York During the Revolutionary War and of the Leading Events in the Other Colonies in That Period. Edited by Edwin F. De Lancey (2 vols.; New York: Printed for the New York Historical Society, 1879), I, 22-23. The dispatch was dated 21 February, 1770. Also quoted in Burr, The Anglican Church in New Jersey, p. 386.

Tory, especially in Bergen County, while the Liberal-Coetus branch in the Raritan Valley produced many patriot leaders.[31] Indeed, the terms "Whig" and "Tory" were used by the rival factions of Bergen County to stigmatize each other.[32]

Long before American independence was declared, the patriot attitude prevailing among the members of the Dutch Church was clearly apparent, whatever the complex combination of economic, political and religious causes.[33] The Committee of Inspection for the Manor of Rensselaerswyk met on March 21, 1775, and voted unanimous thanks to Colonels Ten Broek, Schuyler and Livingston "for their faithful services in the cause of liberty" in the previous session of the Provincial Assembly.[34] In April, the inhabitants of Kingston elected a Committee of Observation to carry out the Articles of Association "enacted" by the first Continental Congress the preceding autumn. All the members were of Dutch descent, and they included the Reformed pastor,

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[31] McCormick, New Jersey from Colony to State, pp. 128-129.

[32] William O. Van Eyck, Landmarks of the Reformed Fathers (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Reformed Press, 1922), p. 174.

[33] The movement toward independence lagged in New York because of the moderate sentiments prevailing among the Whigs. For the background, see Nelson, p. 99.

[34] New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, April 17, 1775. Although I have been unable to verify their actions, they appear to have supported a series of Whig resolutions in support of the Continental Congress. See Mason, pp. 43-44.

Henricus Schoonmaker.[35] Twenty-one members of the Provincial Committee of Correspondence bore Dutch names.

In New York City, the two eldest pastors held back from Whig commitment, but the two junior clergymen left no doubt of their position. The politically inspired sermons of Dr. Archibald Laidlie reached all the way back to the Stamp Act and a pulpit effort which one of his hearers labelled as "very sed-t---s" and as "exciting people to Reb-ll--n."[36] After the repeal of that Act he had made a congratulatory address before the governor and civil and military officials at the City Arms Tavern.[37] It also appears that he was affiliated with the pamphleteering activities of William Livingston in 1767 and 1768.

Now, in the Spring of 1775 after Lexington, the sentiments which had been accumulating for more than a decade took a bolder form. When the New England delegates to the second Continental Congress passed through New York on their way to Philadelphia in May, both "Laidly of the English Dutch Church" and "Livingston of the North Dutch Church" were among the "rebel group" welcoming them. With them

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[35] Ibid., May 1, 1775.

[36] James G. Montresor, The Montresor Journals, edited and annotated by G. D. Scull, Collections of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1881, Publications Fund Series, Vol. XIV (New York: New York Historical Society, 1882), 350. Entry is dated 3 February 1766.

[37] Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Father Knickerbocker Rebels (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 12.

were the Presbyterian ministers, Rogers, Treat and Mason, and such radical leaders as Alex McDougal, Isaac Sears and John Morin Scott.[38] Later in the month the Provincial Congress assembled in the City, and Laidlie and Livingston took their daily turn, with ministers from all denominations, in opening the sessions with prayer, continuing to do so through the summer.

As the cleavage deepened, and the choice between King and Country became inevitable, the voices from the pulpits of the City bolstered many a man in his decision. Dr. Livingston, well-acquainted with Locke, and with the weight of the whole Whig Livingston clan behind him, was "a decided Whig,"[39] whose measured voice carried great authority. Dr. Laidlie was more outspoken. On Sunday morning, November 26, 1775, he preached to crowded audiences in the New Dutch church in recognition of his appointment as "Chaplain to the first Battalion of Independent Minute Men." For his text he chose Galatians 5:1: "Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage."[40]

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[38] Thomas Jones, I, 46.

[39] Gunn, p. 255.

[40] New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, December 4, 1775. Thomas Jones, a Tory historian, described Laidlie as "a Scotch, Dutch parson, of jesuitical, republican and puritanical principles." He charged Laidlie was brought from Holland by the well-known Presbyterian "triumvirate" of John Morin Scott, William Smith, Jr., and William Livingston to turn the Dutch churches into "presbyterian

Surrounded by this atmosphere, it is not surprising that the General Body accomplished nothing in its October meeting; it adjourned and did not meet again for three years.

Early in 1776, General Howe (who had withdrawn from Boston to Halifax) decided to make New York City his base of operations because of its strategic value. This was a decision of great significance to the Dutch Church. When Washington, in anticipation of Howe's move, shuttled his forces from Boston to New York (March 21-April 13) the evacuation of the city, already begun in the autumn of 1775, assumed panic proportions as both Loyalists and Patriots transferred their families and possessions to safety in northern New Jersey or the middle Hudson. Local patriot committees, exploiting the proximity of the Continental troops, used this opportunity to harass the Tories; Kings College and the established churches were closed, and Anglican Loyalists were required to surrender their weapons and swear certain oaths.[41]

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conventicles." "The man was in his heart a presbyterian; in his principles of government a republican, an absolute enemy to monarchical government and a most rancorous hater of the episcopacy. He preached a doctrine, and endeavored to establish a system of politics in his congregation, extremely favorable to the wishes and designs of the republican faction of the province." For more of the same, see Jones' History of New York During the Revolution, I, 21-23.

[41] ERNY, VI, 4291. Governor Tryon to Lord Germain, August 14, 1776; written from the ship "Dutchess of Gordon" off Staten Island.

Kings County on the western end of Long Island was full of "easy-going Dutch who repudiated the Continental Congress by silently ignoring its acts."[42] The Rev. Charles Inglis complained of the patriot treatment of the Anglicans:

> Many had their property destroyed, and more were carried off prisoners. It should be observed, that members of the Church of England were the only sufferers on this occasion. The members of the Dutch Church are very numerous, and many of them joined in opposing the rebellion; yet no notice was taken of them; nor the least injury done to them.[43]

Howe descended upon the New York City area in July of 1776, landing on Staten Island, a Tory stronghold. With the long succession of British victories and American retreats which began with the Battle of Long Island in late August, it was the turn of the Whig citizens to be driven from their homes, deprived of their property, and to be "sent across the Hudson to starve or live upon the charity of the Dutch farmers of New Jersey."[44] When the British first occupied New York, the population was reported to have

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[42]Flick, Loyalism in New York, p. 37.

[43]ERNY, VI, 4295. Inglis had sent his wife and three small children up the Hudson. Dr. Auchmuty, rector of Trinity Church, went with his family to New Brunswick, N. J. Both places were in the heart of rebel country, as it turned out, and they had difficulty in returning to New York City when the British occupied it. President Cooper of Kings fled in 1775, also.

[44]John B. McMaster, A History of the People of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War (8 vols.; New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883-1913), I, 118. Quotation from an eye-witness account.

dropped from 22,000 to less than 3,000.[45] The city's population was halved by the war, and about ten thousand left, never to return.[46]

The pattern of ruin and dispersal which befell the Dutch churches on Staten and Long Islands was repeated many times during the campaigns of 1776 and 1777 as the war spread up the Hudson and spilled over into New Jersey. At Bushwick, the first Reformed church was closed by Lord Howe because it was used by the villagers as a hospital for the American wounded after their defeat on Long Island.[47] In neighboring Queens County, to the east, the Rev. Solomon Froeligh boldly prayed and preached for the colonial cause in the four churches he served; with the British victory he fled to New Jersey, leaving behind all his property and narrowly escaping capture. There he preached to a badly divided Hackensack congregation on a text from II Chronicles XI:4: "Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house; for this thing is done of me." The sermon won him the curses of the Tories preparing to join the British and the applause of

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[45]Wertenbaker, Father Knickerbocker Rebels, p. 98.

[46]Horace Coon, Columbia: Colossus on the Hudson (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1947), p. 53. For slightly different figures see Mason, pp. 78-79.

[47]J. Frederick Berg, "The Collegiate Church of Kings County," in Tercentenary Studies, pp. 46-47.

the Dutch Whigs.[48] Froeligh, his sole possessions consisting of his horse, the clothing he wore, and eighteen pence, set off northward along the highlands in company with Dr. Livingston, also a refugee. For three years Froeligh carried on a random ministry in the Fishkill-Poughkeepsie region before moving back to New Jersey in 1781.

Rev. Martinus Schoonmaker simultaneously served churches in the Brooklyn area on western Long Island and at Harlem, twelve miles away on upper Manhattan Island. He was highly trusted by the Provincial Congress which met for about a month at Harlem, and because of the ministerial freedom of movement which the British permitted through their lines, he was able to carry messages (sewn in his coat) to the Long Island patriots. His usefulness ended when the British discovered his role and put a price on his head. In a small boat hurriedly provisioned by his Consistory, he headed for Manhattan with bullets ripping the sails, and eventually took refuge at Rochester, his

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[48]Cornelius T. Demarest, A Lamentation over the Rev. Solomon Froeligh (New York: n.p., 1827), pp. 25-26. Froeligh quotes an excerpt from a memoir prepared by Peter Labagh. Of the Hackensack and Schraalenbergh congregations the Rev. James Romeyn wrote: "Some few were traitorous--some indifferent; others entered not as warmly into the cause, as might have been expected; others again, with enlightened patriotism, urged on the cause of their country, as the cause of God. A few, no doubt, were excessive in profession of patriotism, and used it to cloak their love of plunder, and their individual resentments." Quoted in Benjamin C. Taylor, Annals of the Classis of Bergen, p. 187.

birthplace in Ulster County.[49] Many of his parishioners followed him in flight, and the services in his churches were suspended during the war.[50]

After the British occupied New York City in mid-September, 1776, the four Dutch ministers of the Collegiate church accompanied most of their church members into exile. Lambertus De Ronde, earlier a staunch member of the Conferentie faction, displayed an ardent patriotism in his sermons, protesting the acts of the British government and the brutal treatment of American prisoners, so that the British commander sent him out of the City. He found a risky haven in the frontier village of Schagticoke on the Hudson above the Mohawk confluence, where he ministered from 1776 to 1784. Later he added the vacant pulpits at Saugerties and Red Hook to his charge, when he moved down the Hudson in 1780.[51] Johannes Ritzema's first stop was at Tarrytown, but he spent most of the war years at Kinderhook. Dr. Livingston left New York in October, 1775, for Kingston, married a third cousin, Sarah Livingston, in the

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[49] J. Frederick Berg, "The Collegiate Churches of Kings County," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 49.

[50] Three Dutch churches and two Presbyterian meeting houses on Staten Island were converted into barracks by the British. On Long Island, the Dutch churches at Brooklyn, Flatbush, Gravesend, New Utrecht, Bushwick, Flatlands, New Lotts, Jamaica and Newton shared the same fate, 1776-1783. Thomas Jones, I, 337.

[51] Benjamin M. Brink, The Early History of Saugerties (Kingston, N.Y.: R. W. Anderson and Son, 1902), p. 166.

same month after his arrival there, and resided for a time with his illustrious father-in-law, Philip Livingston.[52]

Dr. Laidlie abandoned the City about the same time as Livingston, moving to Red Hook, in northern Dutchess County, on the east bank of the Hudson. Until full British occupation of the City on September 15, 1776, the two clergymen alternated in traveling to New York to conduct services. The last administration of the Lord's Supper during the war years took place in June, 1776. Laidlie's flight from the occupation took him first across the Hudson to Hackensack, from which he journeyed northward into the Hudson highlands in company with Schoonmaker.

Laidlie ministered to the Red Hook congregation until his death there in 1779. Livingston stayed only briefly at Kingston, which had a settled pastor. From 1777 to 1779 he shared the pulpit at Albany, where he introduced systematic English-language preaching, while the patriotic regular minister, Eilardus Westerlo, handled the Dutch.[53] The climate there proved too severe for his ailing wife and infant son, and after a brief stay in the village of

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[52]Philip Livingston was a member of the Continental Congress, and within the year signed the Declaration of Independence. For notice of the marriage see the New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury, December 11,1775. Additional details in Gunn's Livingston, p. 246ff.

[53]The important sermons and papers of Westerlo were destroyed in the N.Y. State Library fire at Albany, 1911. Letter of Aug. 16, 1967 from Juliet F. Wolohan, Assoc. Librarian, Manuscript and Historical Section, New York.

Linlithgow, on Livingston Manor, where he held church in a barn,[54] he moved his family to more salubrious surroundings. They spent the last years of the Revolution at Poughkeepsie, where they lived in the family home of his boyhood, and he ministered to the impoverished congregation, which paid his salary in wheat.[55] He was to be the only member of the quartet of New York clergymen to return to that city after the war.

The New Jersey pastors were as zealous in the cause of liberty as their New York colleagues. Jacob R. Hardenbergh, supplying four united congregations on the Raritan, was an outstanding proponent of independence. He was a member of the Provincial Congress which declared for independence in July, 1776, and then sat in the convention which drafted the first New Jersey Constitution. His patriotic sermons caused the British to put a one-hundred pound price on his head, and he slept with a loaded rifle within reach.[56] Simcoe's Rangers burned his Raritan church,

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[54]Jonathan Greenleaf, A History of the Churches, of All Denominations in the City of New York, From the First Settlement to the Year 1850 (2nd ed.; New York: E. French, 1850), p. 37. See also E. T. Corwin, Manual, pp. 336-337.

[55]The original of the wheat contract, dated July 9, 1781, is in Miscellaneous Manuscripts File, John Henry Livingston, New York Historical Society.

[56]W. H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, pp. 114-115, under date 3 November, 1778.

and for years his impoverished congregation had to worship in a private house.

Hardenbergh was on familiar terms with Governor William Livingston of New Jersey, who wrote this testimonial to Henry Laurens, President of Congress:

> Mr. Hardenbergh is a Dutch clergyman who has been exceedingly instrumental in promoting the cause of America;--and the Low Dutch Clergy, both in this and the State of New York are almost universally firm friends of these United States.[57]

During the period from January to June, 1779, General and Mrs. Washington were neighbors of the Hardenberghs, and exchanged friendly visits. When campaigning resumed that year, the minister and Consistory addressed a letter of appreciation to Washington which was promptly answered.[58]

There were many others who deserve recognition but we can name only a few here. Theodoric (Dirck) Romeyn of the Hackensack church, whose fiery sermons in a notoriously Tory county earned him the nick-name "the rebel pastor," was robbed of all his possessions and forced into exile. At Bergen, within reach of the Tory garrison in New York, William Jackson preached fervent Whig sermons to a "lukewarm" or Tory congregation.[59] The church at Millstone,

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[57] Ibid., p. 115.

[58] Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey, New Jersey Archives, 1st Series, Vol. III: Newspaper Extracts, 1779 (30 vols.; Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1880-1917), pp. 441-444 for memorial and Washington's reply.

[59] Burr, p. 378.

served by Christian Foering, was fired by the British in June, 1777, and the interior destroyed. His patriotic preaching led to the formation of a militia company from his own congregation. When a British party was sent to capture him, Mrs. Foering saddled a horse, roused her husband from a sickbed, and helped him to flee. Exposure to the elements worsened his condition and he developed "consumption" from which he died soon afterwards.[60] Benjamin Du Bois of Monmouth County took to the field with the troops, and Benjamin Vanderlinde at Paramus and The Ponds was also a devoted patriot.

On the upper Hudson, the Albany church and its scholarly pastor, Eilardus Westerlo, played an important role in rallying resistance to British and Indian invasions from Canada and the Mohawk Valley. Standing in the pulpit in June, 1776, General Philip Schuyler spoke to the assembled Chiefs of the Six Nations and urged them to remain neutral. With the approach of Burgoyne's forces in the following year, Westerlo turned his church into a center of resistance for all citizens, and urged them to melt down their lead and pewter vessels for musket balls. His

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[60]Charles Maar, "The High Dutch and Low Dutch Element in America, and the German Element in the Dutch Reformed Church," p. 13. This is an unpublished manuscript lecture written in 1924, located in the library of the Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan. Also see E. T. Corwin, Historical Discourse on Occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of the Reformed Dutch Church of Millstone (New York: n. p., 1866), pp. 51-52. Foering had come from Germany in 1769.

patriotic efforts were recognized when he was chosen to make a speech of welcome on the occasion of Washington's visit in 1782.[61] To the west, in the small exposed village of Schenectady, swollen with refugees from the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys, Barent Vrooman recruited troops from the pulpit, and pronounced the benediction over Clinton's brigade, composed largely of Dutchmen, who marched through the Susquehanna, Chemung and Genesee Valleys under Sullivan in 1779.[62]

Nor can we omit a brief mention of the middle Hudson area, where safety was more illusory than real. Living at Leeds, Johannes Schunemann, with rifle in hand, rode the lonely forest paths of the west bank to supply a circuit extending over twenty-five miles. His reputation as a dead-shot earned him his safety but he took no chances, carrying his gun even into the pulpit and checking the priming before he began his sermon. Samuel Verbryck, at Tappan, so intimately connected with the Coetus group and the founding of Queen's College, was jailed briefly by the British. Among

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[61] John De Witt, The De Witt [Family] Records (Albany: The American Historical Co., 1948), pp. 231-232. The De Witt records are bound in the same volume with The Peltz [Family] Records; pagination is continuous, but there are separate indexes. Also see Reformed Church in America, Minutes of the Particular Synod of Albany, May, 1953, for pertinent excerpts taken from Rev. Donald Boyce, A History of the Classis of Albany, pp. 47-57.

[62] John J. Birch, The Pioneering Church in the Mohawk Valley (Schenectady: The Consistory of the First Reformed Church, Schenectady, 1955), p. 84. (Dutch title: De Baanbrekende Kerk van de Mohawk Vallei.)

the Dutch Reformed pastors who originated in their German counterpart, John G. Gebhard was driven up the Hudson from New York City to Claverack, where he ministered under the Dutch Church for fifty years. George Doll at Kingston saw his church and parsonage destroyed by the British bombardment in 1777.[63]

Of the forty-five to fifty ministers serving the Dutch Reformed Church, only three were definitely associated with Loyalism, although there may have been others with Tory leanings or who were lukewarm toward independence.[64] Garrett Lydekker, the lone clergyman ordained by the "Old Dutch" Conferentie group, was pastor of the Bergen County church at English Neighborhood. In 1776 he fled to New York City, taking with him all the church records. Because the British appropriated the Reformed churches in the City for military use, he was given St. George's Chapel as a house of worship for the Loyalist and other Reformed who remained in or retreated to that City. At war's end, he left New York with the British evacuation, and died in England in 1794.[65]

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[63]Maar, pp. 12-14.

[64]ERNY, VI, 4303. Report of meeting, General Body to Classis Amsterdam, 8 October 1778: " . . . all our brethren with exception of only three, so far as we know, . . . have felt no hesitancy in choosing the side of Congress."

[65]C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 405-406. Also ERNY, II, 1219; VI, 4305-4306. Lydekker's New Jersey property was confiscated in 1778. For further material see E. Alfred Jones, The Loyalists of New Jersey: Their Memorials,

The Reverend Hermanus Lancelot Boelen, pastor of three churches on Long Island, was an ardent Tory and fervently prayed for the well-being of George III, to the exasperation of a Whig majority in his congregations. Boelen was replaced by the patriotic Solomon Froeligh, and returned to the Netherlands in 1780.[66]

Coming from the German Reformed Church, the loyalist Johannes Casparus Rubel was teamed in an uneasy yoke with the Whig pastor, Van Sinderin, to serve the Kings County churches on Long Island. His sermons were violent denunciations of those who supported independence, and he called the American troops "Satan's soldiers." In 1784 the General Body charged:

> that during the war, he was frequently carried away by unchristian passions, and often from the pulpit and other places cursed the inhabitants of this land who were opposed to him, declaring with foul, irreligious and unbecoming expressions, that they would all go to everlasting destruction.[67]

To complete his downfall, he was also accused of drunkenness and of mistreating his wife. He was then deposed and, despite a plea to the Classis of Amsterdam in 1786, never restored to good standing. He died in 1797.

Petitions, Claims, etc., From English Records (Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1927), pp. 134-135.

[66]C. E. Corwin, Manual, p. 257.

[67]Acts and Proceedings, I, 108-110. Also quoted in Humphrey, p. 288.

Two other German-born ministers, originally connected with the German Reformed Church, were suspected of Toryism. Abraham Rosenkrantz, in the Mohawk Valley, was rumored to have British sympathies, but the fact that his wife was the sister of General Herkimer helped him to weather the criticisms.[68] John Michael Kern ministered to Dutch churches in Ulster County between 1775 and 1778. In the latter year he was forced to resign because of political differences with his parishioners. He withdrew to New York City, and joined the Loyalist exodus to Nova Scotia after the war.[69]

The record of the Dutch Reformed ministers was thus an active one during the Revolution. Their conduct underlined the comment of the New Yorker, Ambrose Serle, who wrote to Lord Dartmouth in 1776: "The War is at Bottom very much a religious War; and everyone looks to the Establishment of his own Party upon the issue of it." Calvinists, he declared, had "a pretty strong Inclination to every sort of Democracy."[70] Because of the strong support given to the achievement of political independence, it is not surprising to find the Reformed Church striving for a more complete ecclesiastical independence after the war.

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[68] E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 691.

[69] Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 263. Here he is accredited again to the German Reformed Church.

[70] Quoted in Burr, pp. 387-388.

The contributions to the Revolutionary movement by lay members of the Dutch Reformed Church are much more difficult to trace although where they rose to high office or rank their track is easily followed. Simeon De Witt of Ulster County, New York, whose studies at Queens College were interrupted by the British invasion of New Jersey in December, 1776, enlisted and served at Saratoga. Related to General James Clinton, topographer, and Governor George Clinton, he became "assistant geographer" in 1778, and two years later at the age of twenty-four was appointed Geographer of the Army," serving directly under Washington, and was with the army at Yorktown.[71]

Frederick Frelinghuysen, first instructor at Queens, organized an artillery company, served as its captain, and participated in the battles of Monmouth and Trenton, rising eventually to the rank of Colonel. In 1775 and 1776 he was a member of the Provincial Congress and of the Committee of Public Safety in New Jersey, and he was a delegate to the Continental Congress in 1778, 1779, 1782 and 1783.

From the New Brunswick church, the aged elder, Hendrick Fisher, was elected President of the first New Jersey Provincial Congress, and then re-elected at its second session in May, 1775. Ten years earlier he had represented his county at the Stamp Act Congress, and had been a member

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[71] W. H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 128.

of the New Jersey Assembly from 1745 to 1775.[72] In the same church, John Schureman, whose father had come as a teacher with the first Frelinghuysen, was a member of the New Jersey Provincial Congress in 1775, and of the Committee of Public Safety.[73] His son James, a graduate of Queens in 1775, served as an officer of Nielson's Battalion of New Jersey "Minute Men," was captured and imprisoned in one of the notorious New York "sugar house" prisons, but managed to escape. In the fighting at Raritan Landing in October, 1779, Schureman saved the life of Lieutenant Colonel John G. Simcoe, and made him a personal prisoner.[74] His character and service were bountifully rewarded with civic, college and church offices, both before the end of the war and afterwards.[75]

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[72]Donald L. Kemmerer, Path to Freedom: The Struggle for Self-Government in Colonial New Jersey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), pp. 286; 331. See also John Howard Raven in Tercentenary Studies, p. 231.

[73]Richard Wynkoop, "The Schuermans of New Jersey," The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, XXIII (October, 1892), 201-212. The name received several spelling changes; "Schureman" is the 1892 form.

[74]Callahan, Royal Raiders, p. 239, gives the credit for saving Simcoe's life to a young medical student, Jonathan F. Morris. Richard P. McCormick describes Schureman as "one of the captors" of Simcoe in Experiment in Independence; New Jersey in the Critical Period, 1781-1789 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 199.

[75]Wynkoop, The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, XXIII (October, 1892), pp. 201-212. James Schureman was several times Mayor of New Brunswick; representative in the state Assembly, 1783-1785, 1788; a delegate to the Annapolis Conference, September, 1786; elected to Continental Congress November, 1786; as a

The roll call of the New York regiments was indeed that of the Dutch congregations, with their Dutch, German, Huguenot and English names. The First Regiment, led by Colonel Gozen Van Schoick and Lieutenant Rudolphus Ritzema (son of the senior Dutch minister)[76] was present at Saratoga, Monmouth, Valley Forge and Yorktown. Colonel Leonard Ganzevoort, who commanded the Third Regiment, for a time garrisoned Fort Schuyler, was with Sullivan and at Saratoga. The Fourth and Fifth under Colonels Livingston and Du Boys had equally distinguished records.[77]

In New York, Isaac Roosevelt, senior elder in the Collegiate Consistory, joined the Sixth New York Regiment

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Federalist, elected to Congress, 1789-1791 and 1795-1799; he was a Trustee of Queens from 1782 to 1824, and an elder in the New Brunswick church.

[76]Uncredited article, "The First Graduates of King's," The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, XXV, No. 1 (July, 1894), pp. 123-133. The story of Ritzema's erratic career is interesting but clouded. Graduating in the first class at King's his father sent him to Holland to study divinity; he ran off and joined one of Frederick the Great's tall Grenadier Regiments. Returning to America, he studied law and entered full practice in 1775. He was early and active in the Sons of Liberty. He accompanied Montgomery to Canada as Lt. Colonel of a New York regiment, and later received a regimental command of his own. In 1778 he was court-martialed and convicted of either cowardice or treason at White Plains, and went over to the English. Failing to enlist a regiment for the British, he went on half pay; departed to England where he drew additional funds as a suffering Loyalist. He made his Will at Exeter on April 24, 1803, died the same year at Harcross, and is buried in Kent. See also Thomas Jones, I, 45-46.

[77]Brown, p. 72. Also Mary L. Booth, History of the City of New York (2 vols.; New York: W. R. C. Clark, 1867), I, 487.

at the age of fifty, drilling with the rank and file until summoned by Continental Congress to the more urgent task of converting English pounds into American bills--"an emission of currency," as it was styled. He was a delegate to the New York Constitutional Convention in 1776-1777, and elected to the first Senate under Governor George Clinton, his close friend, who also appointed him to the Council. Numerous other members of the approximately fifty families in the Roosevelt clan served in the American forces.[78]

The Albany area churches alone produced a notable string of military men: General Philip Schuyler; Dr. Samuel Stringer, surgeon with a general's rank; Simeon De Witt (previously mentioned); and, among others, Peter Gansevoort, Abraham and Robert Yates, Abraham Van Vechten, John Lansing, Leonard Gansevoort, and Killiaen Van Rensselaer.[79]

Buried in the irregular newspapers of the period, small items such as the following testify to the support given by the adherents of the Dutch Church:

> The following donations were lately received at the hospital at Princeton, viz. From the Rev. Mr. Hardenbergh's congregation at Raritan, 180 pairs of stockings, 62 good shirts, 43 ditto jackets, 11 shirts, 50 woolen jackets, 25 ditto pairs of breeches, 17 coats, 4

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[78]Allen Churchill, The Roosevelts: American Aristocrats (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 67. James Roosevelt, cousin of Isaac, evacuated his family to Kingston and then enlisted at the age of fifty-one.

[79]Robert Wyckoff Searle, "The Church at Albany," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 33.

> blankets, 5 pairs of shoes, besides a quantity of old linen and wollen for hospital use.[80]

Although no battle occurred at Fishkill, Dutchess County, the village was a chief repository for military and hospital stores of the northern army. The women of the town made linen and clothing so diligently for the army it was said that the State Committee had only to make its needs known and they were met.[81]

Of course there were defectors too among the Dutch Reformed populace, but only a few Dutch names were found in the lists of the Loyalists, and many of these were of families which long had been Anglican in their church affiliation.[82] The aristocratic Frederick Philipse was the third and last Lord of the manor of Philipsburgh, located on the east bank of the Hudson about fourteen miles above New York City. He refused to sanction the election of a delegate to the Continental Congress, and eventually was commissioned as a British Captain of Dragoons. He withdrew to England in 1783, having forfeited all his extensive

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[80] Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New Jersey, New Jersey Archives, 2nd series, 5 vols.; Vol. II: Extracts from American Newspapers (Somerville, N. J.: New Jersey Historical Society, 1923), II, 116-117. This item was from 1778. Unfortunately, the general practice in this series is to leave the specific date and newspaper unidentified. Hereafter New Jersey Archives.

[81] Francis M. Kip, "Historical Sketch of Fishkill and its Ancient Church," in The New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, XXI, No. 11 (April, 1890), 54.

[82] Flick, Loyalism in New York, p. 36.

property to the State of New York, and died three years later.[83] The pulpit of the old "Sleepy Hollow" church on the manor had been Philipse's to bestow by the right of advowson, and here he and his wife had sat on a dais above the other parishioners. After the war these "thrones" were torn out by the tenants, many of whom purchased land from the three hundred eleven parcels into which the estate was divided.[84]

In summary, the clergy of the Dutch Reformed Church were almost solidly in support of the patriot cause, many contributing to the outcome, not only through patriotic sermons but also through recruitment and by personal acts

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[83]New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, XX, No. 3 (July, 1895), pp. 123-124. See also Jaspar Dankers and Peter Sluyter, Journal of a Voyage to New York and a Tour in Several of the American Colonies in 1679-1680. Transl. and ed. Henry C. Murphy. March of America Facsimile Series, No. 27 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), pp. 362-365. The last lord of the manor was Frederick Philipse, who forfeited the estate. He had two sisters: Mary, married to Col. Roger Morris, and Susanna, married to Beverly Robinson. Both men were officers in the British army and convinced Loyalists and Anglicans. The sisters' portions of the estate were also forfeited, and like their brother they withdrew to England with their husbands. This lengthy note on the Philipse genealogy and family business was written by Henry C. Murphy, who originally edited and translated the Journal, 1867.

[84]John Knox Allen, "The Church in Westchester County," in Tercentenary Studies, pp. 122, 127. E. Wilder Spaulding, Review of The Disposition of Royalist Estates in the Southern District of New York, by Harry B. Yoshpe, American Historical Review, XLV, No. 4 (July, 1940), pp. 899-900. Also reviewed by Oscar Zeichner, New York History, XXI, No. 1 (Jan., 1940), pp. 80-81. For a short interesting article on the Philipse family and estate, see Alice C. Desmond, "Mary Philipse: Heiress," New York History, XXVIII, No. 1 (Jan., 1947), pp. 22-32.

of bravery. Despite wide division in the areas adjacent to New York City,[85] a very large majority of the Church members supported in various ways the cause of political independence. While the largest number served in the military forces, many also participated in the political manifestations of the struggle as members of various committees, Provincial Assemblies, Constitutional Conventions, and the new State Legislatures. Proportionately, the contributions of constituents of the Dutch Church were as great as those from any other religious body, although in numbers they were far fewer than Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

At the highest ecclesiastical level, the spread of the war into the Hudson Valley and New Jersey made it impossible for the General Body, a new and untested organization, to meet regularly or to give effective leadership to its harried churches. For three years it held no sessions, but from the time these were resumed, in October, 1778, it voiced unequivocal support for American military and political leaders and for the objectives of the war. Supporting American independence as a "just cause," the General Body recorded:

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[85]For a more detailed account of the friction between Dutch Tories and Patriots in the New York area, see Adrian C. Leiby, The Revolutionary War in the Hackensack Valley: The Jersey Dutch and the Neutral Ground, 1775-1783 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962) and also Leonard Lundin, Cockpit of the Revolution: The War for Independence in New Jersey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940).

> In view of the manifest, and to all rational and conscientious people, most clearly evident justice of the course, all our brethren, with exception of only three, so far as we know . . . have felt no hesitancy in choosing the side of Congress. And herein we are from time to time increasingly strengthened and confirmed, among other things, by the unrighteous acts and unheard of cruelties committed by the English army everywhere. . . .[86]

In October of 1780, the General Body, meeting at New Paltz, New York, addressed a Memorial and Petition specifically to Governor Clinton and the legislature of New York, which clearly recognized the new governments on both state and "national" levels. And they also made the Lord a party to the transaction, observing:

> That the beneficient Ruler of the Universe has, at diverse times and occasions, given the most indubitable proofs of his Divine and benevolent interposition for the good of these United States, and this State in particular.
>
> That the unwearied exertions of these United States, and of this State in particular, and especially the unparalleled perseverance of the American army exhibited in the prosecution of the present just and necessary war, from whatever personal motives it may otherwise proceed, cannot but be considered as national virtues; such as have usually been owned and accepted of by the Deity in the issue.[87]

The dislocations caused by the war prevented both the General Body and the five Particular Bodies from gathering, and from accomplishing anything of great importance when they were finally able to assemble. At the meeting of the General Body in New York City in October,

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[86] ERNY, VI, 4303; also found in The Acts and Proceedings, I, 68.

[87] ERNY, VI, 4307-4308; Acts and Proceedings, I, 84-86.

1775, several delegates were already absent. Confounded by the course of events, the Body adjourned and was unable to convene again until 1778 because the Particular Bodies were unable to meet and choose delegates. After the three-year interval, a skeleton crew of six ministers and three elders met at New Paltz, on October 6. The Particular Bodies of Albany and New York City were unrepresented, and the stipulation that all delegates had to produce proper credentials was waived for the sole delegate from the Hackensack Body, Dirck Romeyn, who was a fugitive from his parish.[88]

At the conclusion of their sessions on October 8, the officers prepared the Minutes of such business as they had transacted and a covering letter, both optimistically intended for transmission to the Classis of Amsterdam. The letter reveals the utter disruption of the Church.

> . . . the frequent incursions of the enemies in different parts of this land, are, to our sorrow, the unavoidable causes of our not having held a General Meeting since the year 1775. The city of New York being occupied by the enemy, the (ministerial) brethren of the city, forsaken by their church members who were for the most part scattered hither and thither, were obliged to seek safety in the interior of this state. Of those on Long Island, two (of the ministers) are hemmed in by the enemy on every side. So it has been impossible for the Particular Meeting . . . of New York to convene since that time.
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> In the district of Albany fresh disturbances were raised some time ago by the enemies in the interior, in conjunction with the savage heathen, whom they stir

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[88]John A. Todd, "The Posture of Its [Dutch Reformed Church] Ministers and People During the Revolution," in Centennial Discourses, p. 126.

> up against us. For that reason that (Particular) Meeting also could not be held this year any more than last year. This, too, is the reason why no members from there have come to attend this (General) Meeting. About Hackensack the enemies appeared again a few days since, numbering from seven to eight thousand, so that from that district, (the Particular Meeting of Hackensack) but one delegate came, and he without an elder.
>
> We should be glad to communicate at this time some satisfactory report concerning the present condition of the country and the Church; but the lack of reports from all the Particular Meetings . . . prevents us as yet from doing anything in this way.[89]

The letter included a long recital of British misdeeds, such as the abuse of prisoners, destruction of homes and villages, instigation of Indian attacks, and " . . . above all, the malicious and God-provoking destruction of our churches, both in New York and in the country."

Rather prematurely, the General Body, looking with more hope to the next year, charged the five Particular Bodies with assessing the damages to the ecclesiastical fabric in their districts, and with discovering the number driven from their homes and in need of assistance.[90] But there was a peril abroad in the land that was greater than destroyed buildings or impoverished refugees. Morality and spiritual zeal were also casualties of the war.

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[89] ERNY, VI, 4303. The material in parentheses probably should be in brackets as editor's interpolations.

[90] Nothing was accomplished along these lines. The General Body in 1781 again called for compliance with the ordered survey. ERNY, VI, 4310. Also in Acts and Proceedings, I, 93-94.

> And what increases our grief is, that although the Lord smites, we yet seem so little affected; for our youth, upon the brink of ruin, indulge in vices heretofore unknown . . . and (which grieves the Rev. Body in their inmost soul) even the followers of the crucified Lamb, as well ministers as members, have abated in their zeal . . . and made themselves chargeable with many iniquities.[91]

Another day, November 12, 1778, was proclaimed for congregational fasting and prayer.

Although the General Body met regularly again from 1778, continuing military operations--in northeastern New Jersey, the Hudson Valley, and on the New York and Pennsylvania frontiers--precluded any reconstructive action in the next session at Pompton, New Jersey. It was also obsessed with the moral and spiritual decline which continued to spread despite the exertions of magistrates and ministers. When the Synod re-assembled at New Paltz in October, 1780, the calamitous events of the previous year weighed heavily upon the delegates. The most recent of these, Arnold's treason, had occurred only a few weeks before and less than twenty-five miles from their meeting place. The main product of their deliberations was a lengthy Memorial and Petition, addressed to the Governor and Legislature of New York, which lamented "the high-handed and continually advancing wickedness of this land, whereby the righteous displeasure of God is more and more excited against it."[92]

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[91] Acts and Proceedings, I, 68.

[92] Acts and Proceedings, I, 83-86. Also given in

Assuming that some defect existed, either in the "laws directed against vice and immorality," or in the execution of the laws, the General Body, without presuming to name the defect, called upon the state government to investigate conditions, and either to frame new laws to reverse the decline in morality, or to enforce those existing laws that were satisfactory. The Rev. Isaac Rysdyck was specifically charged with delivering the document to Governor Clinton personally. Both man and mission failed in their purpose, for Rysdyck delivered the Petition to two unnamed members of the government, and nothing further was heard of it.[93]

Occupying no position from which to influence the course of military and civil affairs, the General Body could do little more in 1782 than return to a discussion of the prevailing immorality. They themselves approved the drafting of an expose detailing the sins and disorders punishable by the civil magistrates, and requesting enforcement of laws for the suppression of such evils. However, they deferred action for a year, until the sentiments of the Particular Bodies could be polled.[94] By then (October

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full in ERNY, VI, 4307-4308, and E. T. Corwin, Digest, pp. 23-24.

[93] ERNY, VI, 4309-4310. (Minutes of General Body held at New Hurley, New York, October, 1781.) See note 91, below.

[94] ERNY, VI, 4310. Meeting at New Millstone, New Jersey, October, 1782. These two documents are important

1783), the fighting had ended, the British were in the process of evacuating New York, and specific problems of reconstruction required attention.

The extant records of the five Particular Bodies (intermediate between the General Body and the individual congregations) reflect the same pattern of suffering and dislocation that characterize the records of the General Body. Volume One of the Minutes of the New Brunswick Body, for the period 1771-1811, has been lost, so that the records of the separate churches must be pieced together for any general picture.[95] The other New Jersey Body was centered at Hackensack, in an area where the Dutch churches were bitterly divided between Tory and Patriot factions. The Minutes for the years 1773-1778 were lost during the British invasion of the Schraalenbergh vicinity, but are well preserved after 1778.[96] Unfortunately, the entry in the first existing volume is typical of many which follow:

> The Assembly found to its sorrow that, due to the gloomy times and prospects enveloping the country--

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because not only did the General Body recognize the new state government, as we have seen, but they indicated that an appreciation of new Church-State relations had not yet developed, although the New York State Constitution was in effect.

[95]E. T. Corwin, Historical Discourse on Occasion of the Centennial Anniversary of the Reformed Dutch Church of Millstone (New York: n.p., 1866), p. 45, note.

[96]Benjamin Taylor, Annals of Bergen, p. 26 and note. These extant records are in Dutch from May, 1778 to August 20, 1799.

> and especially the communities in this area--, several members of this gathering have been prevented from attending. We hope and desire that God will remove our difficulties and mercifully heal the breach in his Church.[97]

With most of the clergy of the New York Body in flight, there were no Particular Meetings held during the war. The Albany Body fared almost as badly due to continuous Indian and British threats; no meetings were held from 1775 to 1778, and the whole frontier was terrorized. The Kingston Body, despite its exposed position on the middle Hudson, had the best record of the five Particular Bodies; even so, its meetings were irregular and attendance was poor from the nine or ten member churches in Ulster and Dutchess Counties.[98] In 1781, only half of the ten churches sent delegates, and four were represented the following year. The Minutes of the war years although of some interest are generally of small importance because so little could be done. Certainly, the most important act of the Kingston Body occurred in May, 1777, when they examined the licensed two candidates for the ministry under authority granted by the General Body, which was unable to meet.[99]

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[97] Minutes of the Honorable Particular Body of Hackensack, 1778 (Handelingen van de Wel. E. Byzondere Vergaderinge van Hackensack in de Pannekerk, de 16 & 17 May, 1778), p. 21, Article IV. My translation.

[98] The Minutes of the Kingston Classis (Body) are on microfilm at the Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Mich. In Dutch, they are on Roll 310 P, Vol. I, 1773-1799, without page numbers.

[99] ERNY, VI, 4307.

Because of its significance for the future of the Church, the disruption of Church-related education was a cause of grave concern on all ecclesiastical levels. Although the search for a Divinity Professor was postponed until after the war, the decentralized theological training authorized by the General Body, in the homes of specified ministers, turned out a trickle of dedicated students for the ministry. In the period from 1776 to 1783, seven students were examined and ordained, after receiving their training in such widely separated places as Albany, Poughkeepsie and Raritan.[100]

No less important was the suspension of academic activities at New Brunswick, as Queen's College literally took to the road with its single instructor and a few determined students. Queen's, like its older Presbyterian counterpart at Princeton, lay on the main stage road between New York and Philadelphia, which practically assured involvement in the war. But more than coincidental geography was concerned. The thousand inhabitants of this thriving market town were deeply divided between Tory and Patriot camps.[101] As with the College of New Jersey, Queen's

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[100]E. T. Corwin, Manual, Appendix, p. 724. According to this account, Livingston trained three, Hardenbergh, two, Westerlo, one; the seventh was trained in Philadelphia by a Dr. Weyberg of the German Reformed Church. A slightly different version is given in E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 306.

[101]McCormick, New Jersey from Colony to State, pp. 84-85.

became a center of Whig sentiment, and not only the handful of students but also the forty-man Board of Trustees incurred English anger because they openly supported the revolution.

When the first extra-legal Provincial Assembly met in New Brunswick to condemn the Coercive Acts and to elect delegates to the Continental Congress, the Rev. Jacob R. Hardenbergh, President of the Trustees and acting president of the college, was among the delegates. For his manifold patriotic activities he was hounded by the British throughout the war, and his church at Raritan was burned. Versatile young Frederick Frelinghuysen, by the opening of 1775, had exchanged the classroom for marriage and the practice of law.[102] His successor as tutor was a Princeton classmate, John Taylor; upon him fell the task of somehow maintaining instruction during the war years.

There was little reason for the students at Queen's to interrupt their studies in 1775, but with Howe's occupation of Staten Island in July, 1776, the war was brought near to New Brunswick. By November, Cornwallis was pursuing

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[102]Most works seem to support the myth that Frelinghuysen left the classroom to raise a company of artillery which he captained, and one even maintains that he was connected with Queens all through the war. W. H. S. Demarest, the best authority, states that Frelinghuysen probably left Queens before the start of 1775. In view of the fact that Frelinghuysen was married on January 10, 1775, and would need more income, I accept Demarest's statement. For the wedding announcement, see the New York Journal, or General Advertiser, January 26, 1775.

the forces of Washington and Greene into northern New Jersey, and classes broke up as the students scattered to their homes or to the colors. Nicholas Lansing left for his home in the Albany area. Simeon De Witt barely had time to shoulder his knapsack and rifle, leaving his books and clothing in the college as he fled. The British occupied New Brunswick from December 2, 1776 to June 22, 1777, taking over the college building;[103] however the whole area was the scene of fluctuating military activity until the end of the war.

With such help as Hardenbergh could give, John Taylor withdrew with a few students to the North Branch of the Raritan (present Readington), where he divided his time between teaching and his military activities as a Captain in Nielson's Battalion of New Jersey "Minute Men." He took part in the Delaware crossing, fought at Trenton and Princeton, and wintered at Morristown in 1776 and 1777. At North Branch he taught a few college-level classes in a log church, and perhaps in neighboring houses, which served to maintain a thin thread of continuity with the chartered institution. The Queen's Grammar School was more actively maintained in this rural exile, and for a time Taylor had the help of John Bogart, a member of the Queen's class of

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[103]Edwin S. Gaustad, A Religious History of America (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 90, states that the British burned the building, but I have found no other evidence of this.

1778.[104] On April 27 of that year, the following advertisement appeared:

> The Publick is hereby informed that the business of Queen's College in New-Jersey, formerly carried on in the city of New Brunswick, is begun at North Branch of Raritan, in the county of Somerset, in a pleasant and retired neighborhood; lodging and board may be had in decent families at £ 30 proclamation money. . . . Apply to John Tailor, A. M. Tutor at the place aforesaid.[105]

A month later, the military situation appeared to have improved, and plans were made to re-open the college in New Brunswick.[106] This semblance of a school returned long enough to hold its commencement exercises there in September, and then--in the face of renewed military activity--withdrew to North Branch again. In January, 1779, the New Jersey Gazette carried an announcement reminding the readers that Queen's was still carrying on at North Branch, and emphasizing two special attractions which have twentieth century overtones:

> This neighborhood is so far distant from headquarters that not any of the troops are stationed here, neither does the Army in the West interfere with the business

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[104]John Howard Raven, "The Church and its Institutions in New Brunswick, New Jersey," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 241.

[105]Documents Relating to the Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey, New Jersey Archives, 2nd Series, Vol. II: Extracts from American Newspapers, 1778 (5 vols.; Trenton: New Jersey Historical Society, 1903), p. 215.

[106]Alfred H. Bill, New Jersey and the Revolutionary War, New Jersey Historical Series No. 11 (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1964), p. 90. See also Lundin, p. 409.

> of the college. The faculty also takes the liberty to remind the public that the representatives of this State have enacted a law by which students at college are exempted from military duty.[107]

The combination of military and tutorial duties proved to be too much for John Taylor. He wrote to Governor Livingston on September 25, 1779, that he was delayed in making a military report, and was absent from his regiment (in which he had risen to the rank of Colonel) in order to attend the examination of the students at Queen's College. Because the Trustees insisted that he carry out fully his obligations to the school, Taylor asked for release from his military duties.[108] By 1780 the situation had eased sufficiently so that Taylor could lead his little band of students to Millstone, half the distance back to New Brunswick.

As early as 1778, the Trustees had noted that some changes were necessary in the college charter: among other things, the oath of allegiance to the king was an anachronism. Consequently, in response to a petition from the Board for changes in the charter and a confirmation of their privileges, the New Jersey legislature repeated the grant on June 5, 1781, and provided for an oath of allegiance to the United States, in qualifying the Trustees. The

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[107] Quoted without source in Gaustad, A Religious History of America, p. 90.

[108] W. H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 113. Also in Craven, p. 241. Unfortunately, the minutes of the Board of Trustees are lost for the years before 1782.

legislature also revoked the old requirement that no more than one-third of the Trustees could be ministers. In 1781 the college returned to New Brunswick, and by the next year reported eighteen students enrolled for classes in the run-down and war-damaged buildings.[109] The exertion and sacrifice of Hardenbergh and Taylor had provided the narrow margin by which Queen's College survived the war.

The Revolution was no less disastrous to the grammar and common schools associated with many of the Dutch Reformed churches. In villages and rural areas, the schools were generally closed, but even in towns and cities education was sporadic or non-existent. After the British occupied New York City, all schools were closed until the end of the war.[110] In northern New Jersey, all the way from Bergen to Trenton the schools were disrupted. Lack of funds as well as shortage of teachers contributed to the decline of the schools, and there was a great dearth of books, even of Catechisms, for use as texts.

To the faithful, the result of this lapse in education seemed to be not only a noticeable decline in literacy but also a simultaneous (and ominous) increase in idleness

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[109]Schmidt, p. 15. Also see W. H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, pp. 139-144. Curiously, the name was not changed to Rutgers until 1825.

[110]Henry W. Dunshee, History of the School of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church in the City of New York from 1633 to 1883 (2nd ed., revised and enlarged; New York: By authority of the Consistory, 1883), p. 58.

and vice. In 1778, the General Body observed: " . . . our youth, upon the brink of ruin, indulge in vices heretofore unknown."[111] Four years later they were still pondering how to prevent further corruption of morals among the rising generation and others.[112] These problems were not peculiar to the Dutch Church, however, but were matters of concern common to all denominations.[113] Only in maintaining the use of the Dutch language among the young people did the Church have a separate problem.

The dislocation and mingling of the population made it impossible to preserve linguistic distinction, and officials of the Church eventually recognized the fact. In 1776, and again in 1778, the Kingston Body recommended closer supervision of the schools in its area, and, as far as possible, to see that the Heidelberg Catechism was taught.[114] Two years later, because of the neglect of the "Greater Catechism," which was written in Dutch, the Kingston officials gave their approval to the use of the shortened form

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[111] ERNY, VI, 4302.

[112] Ibid., 4310.

[113] For denominational aspects of the "low and declining state" of religion in the post-war era, see Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, pp. 91-96; Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered At The River (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1958), Chapter I, pp. [3]-19; and Russel B. Nye, The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830, The New American Nation Series, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, 1960), pp. 204-205.

[114] Minutes of the Kingston Classis, May 28, 1776.

printed in English which had been accepted in New York City since 1764.[115] In 1781, in answer to a query from the New Brunswick Body as to the feasibility of making the Hellenbroek version standard and translating it into English, the General Body replied that it could see little value in the proposal because the churches used so many different versions.[116] After a year's reflection it reversed this opinion upon the urging of the Hackensack Body, which asked

> Whether it would not be good, in order to correct the neglect in the schools, to have the Heidelbergh Catechism and Compendium, with some questions and answers . . . printed in English, to be used in schools as a text-book for children, that from their youth they may be instructed in Divine Truth.[117]

The General Body now gave full approval, leaving the manner of execution to each Particular Body. Thus an important step was taken to introduce the English language into the rural and less populated areas, where the Dutch language had its stronghold.

In the settlement which had brought peace to the Coetus and Conferentie factions in 1772, Article XXII provided:

> Union with the Church of Holland. To preserve in the best possible manner the bond of union with our highly esteemed mother Church (which we greatly desire,)

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[115] Ibid., September 5, 1778.

[116] Acts and Proceedings, I, 92.

[117] Ibid., 98.

> there shall first be sent every year a complete copy of all the acts of our general assembly, signed by the Praeses and Scriba, for the time being, to the Classis of Amsterdam, as duly named by the Synod of North Holland for that purpose.[118]

The closing of the port of New York, the dispersal of the ministers, and the difficulty of maintaining internal communications made it impossible for the American Church to honor this pledge. Although unofficial information filtered through to Amsterdam, there was no direct communication. Thrown back upon its own resources, the Dutch Church in the new nation never fully reestablished the bond after the War, despite an occasional exchange of letters.

Interruption of the correspondence began as early as 1774, and was tersely reflected in the "Acts of the Classis of Amsterdam," dated July 17, 1775, under the heading "New York and New Jersey": "The Classis has received no information from the Churches in North America on account of the troubles prevailing."[119] The Minutes of the superior body, the Synod of North Holland, meeting later in the same month at Edam, reveal that the information about "the troubles prevailing" was received by private letter.[120]

On October 12, 1775, the Classis of Amsterdam wrote to the General Body in America:

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[118] Gunn, pp. 230-231.

[119] ERNY, VI, 4288.

[120] Ibid.

> We hope you have received our last two letters, sent you last year at the proper time.
>
> But ever since you informed us that a General Meeting was held at Kingston, Oct. 5th to Oct. 8th, 1773, and of the business then done, we have heard nothing more of the conditions of your Church.[121]

Because the General Body and its subordinates were unable to meet there was nothing to report in 1776 and 1777. And had there been, there existed no way to convey the news to Europe. The Minutes of Classis and Synod in the Netherlands contained the laconic entries: "no tidings have come from those churches," or "no report has come from that land," and finally, a simple "no reports." These notations continued through 1778 and 1779.

In 1778, a crippled General Body met at New Paltz with Dr. Hardenbergh presiding. Their Minutes were not received in Amsterdam until 1780. Thereafter, there was silence until the end of the war. The brief entries in the Minutes of the Classis and Synod do not show the great concern which they must have felt. "The Classes are longing for more favorable tidings . . . " (1781);[122] "The grievous war . . . must be taken to be the cause of our not getting any reports from these churches." (1782)[123]

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[121] Ibid., 4289. The Dutch version is on microfilm at the Western Theological Seminary library, roll 22 P, "Correspondence."

[122] See ERNY, VI, 4301 and 4304 for similar entries.

[123] Acts of the Synod of North Holland, 1781, 1782. See ERNY, VI, 4309 and 4310; microfilmed extracts in Dutch, Western Theological Seminary, Roll 22 P.

When the Classis of Amsterdam learned of the impending peace in America, it attempted to resume the long-interrupted correspondence. On July 21, 1783, they wrote to the "Ecclesiastical Assembly of New York and New Jersey":

> We have very largely participated in the disagreeable circumstances into which your country, and thereby your churches also, have come.
>
> We should therefore not have failed in answering that letter 1778 at once, and in sending over on that occasion the Acts of the North Holland Synods. But aside from our lack of opportunity, the circumstances were so critical that we deemed it advisable, so long as the calamities of war continued, to break off for a while the correspondence, much as we otherwise love to exchange letters with you; especially because the letter with the accompanying Acts of the Synod of North Holland of the year 1776, which we sent to your Revs. by way of St. Eustatius, does not seem to have reached its destination; and we feared that subsequent letters would suffer the same fate.
>
> As now, however, the state of affairs takes, provisionally, a more favorable turn, we want to avail ourselves of the first opportunity to write to your Revs. to show that it will be very agreeable to us to maintain the correspondence with the churches of New York and New Jersey. Wherefore we send herewith the Acts of the latest North Holland Synods. And as we are very anxious to be informed of the present state of your churches nothing will please us more than to contribute something for promoting their welfare.[124]

Correspondence began to flow once more in 1784, and a year later the General Body presented a summary of the church conditions in America and expressed a desire to remain in correspondence with the Classis of Amsterdam.[125] However,

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[124] ERNY, VI, 4311.

[125] There are two volumes of manuscript translations entitled "Extracts of the Acta Classis of Amsterdam, 1632-1810" on microfilm at the Western Theological Seminary. Vol. II (1740-1810) contains the brief notices for the war years. The translations are of poor quality.

by this time the Americans had decided to drop the terms of General and Particular Body (which the Articles of Union had stipulated at Amsterdam's behest) and use the regular terms of "Classis" and "Synod," thus indicating that the earlier relationship to Europe no longer prevailed.

The rejection of British authority by the colonies had ended the chartered and favored position of the Dutch Church in New York and New Jersey, and necessitated a new definition of Church and State relationships to include all religious bodies. Well before the Declaration of Independence, the break-down of provincial governments led to the inquiries of Congress as to how the states were to deal with the situation. The answer was given on May 15, 1776, in a resolution recommending the creation "of such governments as shall, in the opinion of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents. . . . "[126] Two months later, the Fourth Provincial Assembly of New York met in the Court House at White Plains on July 9 and ratified the Declaration of Independence. The next day it assumed the title "Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York," and prepared to draft a constitution.[127] Repeatedly forced to

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[126]Edmund C. Burnett, The Continental Congress: A Definitive History of the Continental Congress from its Inception in 1774 to March, 1789 (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 157.

[127]Pratt, pp. 81-82. I am indebted to chapters four and five for much of the material in this section.

retreat before Howe's advances, the Convention became a "saddle bag assembly."

In August a committee of thirteen members was selected to prepare a plan of government; the chairman, Abraham Yates, Albany County, and members Robert Yates, Albany County, and Charles De Witt, Ulster County, were almost certainly from the Dutch Reformed Church,[128] and possibly there were others. There were so many equally pressing matters that a report was postponed several times and little appears to have been done until the end of 1776. On February 12, 1777, the Convention contemplated its sixth move and voted to leave Poughkeepsie for Kingston; here the completed Constitution was adopted on Sunday evening, April 20.[129]

Debate on the religious provisions had been led by John Jay, Gouverneur Morris and Robert R. Livingston. Such questions as arose over religious liberty and the separation of Church and State were concerned rather with the scope or extent to be accorded these principles, than with these principles themselves.[130] Four articles in the finished document dealt directly or indirectly with religion, and thus were of significance to the Dutch Reformed Church.

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[128]Searle, in Tercentenary Studies, p. 33.

[129]William H. Marnell, The First Amendment (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1964), p. 110. Also Spaulding, His Excellency George Clinton, p. 94.

[130]Pratt, p. 84.

Although the Anglican establishments in the four lower counties had in fact disappeared with the start of hostilities, Article XXXV formally provided for their disestablishment. While continuing certain parts of English common and statute law and acts of the colonial assembly prevailing before [the outbreak of war], it declared:

> That all such parts of the said common law, and all such, of the said Statute, and Acts aforesaid, or parts thereof, as may be construed to establish or maintain any particular denominations of Christians or their Ministers . . . are hereby abrogated and rejected.[131]

By this provision, all denominations were reduced to the same status; in effect, it constituted repeal of the Ministry Act of 1693.

Article XXXVIII was concerned with religious freedom. The issue aroused extended debate, primarily between the anti-Catholic forces led by John Jay and the more liberal-minded members behind Gouverneur Morris. Jay wanted to prevent Catholics from settling in New York because he believed their link to Rome made them politically dangerous. Both his open and disguised efforts were defeated. Provisions of the accepted article granted full equality:

> . . . that the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever hereafter be allowed within this State to all mankind. Provided that the liberty of conscience hereby granted, shall not be so construed, as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or

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[131]New York State, The Constitution of the State of New York (Fish-kill: printed by Samuel Loudon, 1777).

justify practices inconsistent with the peace or safety of this State.[132]

Anglican clergymen had often interfered in colonial politics, especially from the time of Lord Cornbury. For the non-Anglicans, at least, and presumably for the "Old Dutch" faction, the plight of the Anglican Church was a proper example of the dangers of too close a relationship between Church and State. The Thirty-ninth Article, accepted without debate, was intended to exclude the clergy from any direct participation in the government.

> . . . ministers of the gospel are, by their profession, dedicated to the service of God and the care of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their function; therefore, no minister of the gospel, or priest of any denomination, whatsoever shall, at any time hereafter, under any pretence or description whatever, be eligible to, or capable of holding, any civil or military office or place, within this State.[133]

The content of Article Forty-two concerning a naturalization oath was the cause of much debate in the Convention. Inasmuch as freedom of religion already had been guaranteed to all denominations, Jay hoped to make this article serve his anti-Catholic purposes. The original proposal simply provided that newcomers who purchased lands in

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[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid. Whether from humor or malice, Thomas Jones ascribed the origin of this article to the loquaciousness of Abraham Keteltas. He was a clergyman who had been rejected by the Dutch Reformed Church and secured ordination from the Presbyterians. As a member of the Convention, Jones said, Keteltas talked so much that he bored the whole body, "and to this fact was owing section xxxix." History of New York, I, 648.

the state could become citizens by taking an oath of allegiance. Jay offered an amendment which required prospective citizens to "abjure and renounce all allegiance and subjection to all and every foreign king, prince, potentate and state, in all matters ecclesiastical as well as civil."[134] This amendment was adopted by a vote of twenty-six to nine, on March 26.

Jay now proposed a modification of his accepted amendment. Because the Dutch Reformed Church was involved--still nominally under the governing bodies in the Netherlands and potentially able to draw ministers from that source--he proposed that the Reformed churches be exempted from the provisions of his amendment. The majority was unwilling to accept this because it made a distinction in favor of a particular church. After further debate, a compromise solution was worked out by a three-man committee, of which Jay was a member, and the "somewhat limited anti-Catholic naturalization oath" was included in the adopted article.[135]

Although the official Bodies of the Dutch Church, so far as can be learned, made no reference to the work of the Convention or the religious provisions of the Constitution, Church leaders were well informed about the

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[134] Quoted in Pratt, p. 93.

[135] *Ibid.*, pp. 93-96.

proceedings.[136] Whether through personal or family connections, Dr. Livingston very early secured a copy of the draft constitution from General Abraham Ten Broek, an Albany delegate.[137] As a result he was thoroughly acquainted with its contents and was able to comment knowledgeably on the religious provisions debated in the Convention. On February 28, 1777, he wrote a long letter to his relative, Robert R. Livingston, in which he heartily endorsed Article XXXVIII on religious liberty, having, as he said, early familiarized himself with Lockeian principles of freedom.

> Your plan breathes much of the same spirit and I am happy to see an extensive scope is given for religious freedom. It is proper that all men within this State should believe for themselves and worship God according to the dictates of their conscience without depending upon fellow subjects, sister churches, or even the civil magistrates in religion. This prerogative all men possess and it is not a new grant, or any gift from the State but the natural right and just demand of every rational creature.[138]

He was critical, however, of the passive and negative role assigned to the State. The Calvinistic tradition which he represented for his Church had not progressed as

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[136]The capable Dr. Livingston was then temporarily settled in Albany, where he not only talked with the local delegates, but also carried on a frank and extensive correspondence with his kinsman, Robert R. Livingston (1746-1813), who was one of the most influential members. The two men were of the same age and enjoyed a cordial relationship.

[137]Letter, John H. Livingston to Robert R. Livingston, February 28, 1777, Robert R. Livingston Papers, Bancroft Transcripts, I, 311-327, New York Public Library. See also Mason, p. 227, n. 46.

[138]J. H. to R. R. Livingston, February 28, 1777.

far as the "wall of separation" between Church and State of which Jefferson later spoke. He believed, with many of his contemporaries, that the State should support religion--but not a particular church or denomination. Religion was regarded not only as a "positive good," but also as a social control--and all the more necessary in that period of corruption, declining morals and rationalistic tendencies. Therefore he chided his cousin:

> You take great care to establish and perpetuate the civil rights of the people, and your plan with propriety descends to many minute particulars for this purpose, while the important article of religious liberty (which is the source of all our comforts and without which society is not worth preserving) is finished off with a single word; some general terms decide the whole matter as a question of no immediate influence to the well-being of the State. Surely religion, so much revered by the wisest of mankind in every age, is not yet so antiquated as to be refused a deliberate thought among our modern legislators.[139]

Dr. Livingston declared that the State had a right to interfere in the religious life of its subjects in two respects: to promote religion in general, and to defend it from all persecution. This did not involve passing judgment on the truth or falsity of any creed.

> But by promoting I mean that the State judges the fear of God and his service to be of great importance to society and therefore determines to encourage and help the subjects in the affair. . . . This important object is wholly neglected in your plan. You have guarded against persecution by declaring in general, and upon the whole, sufficiently intelligible terms that all sects shall be permitted to exist; but you

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[139] *Ibid*.

have made no provision for the encouragement of religion and virtue. . . .[140]

Livingston presumed that under the new government, all religious organizations would have to apply for charters of incorporation in order to protect their property and funds, and he feared that this would leave the door ajar for arbitrary or discriminatory treatment. Even if this did not happen, it might prove a costly and time-consuming nuisance. He thus "beggars the question" with a question: "Why must people be reduced to a possibility of injustice by the perverseness of a Governor and the certainty of expenses for obtaining that which the Legislators themselves declare to be their inherent right?" Why not settle this problem by inserting a paragraph in the Constitution? His proposal was to let any organization, so long as it posed no threat to the well-being of the State or the morals of the community, simply register with the County Court of Sessions, giving the title of their organization and the names of their members. This, he said, would answer all the ends of incorporation. "This would be providing for religion and yet leaving it to the industry and character of each sect to take care of itself." From ensuing

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[140] Ibid. The Memorial and Petition sent by the Dutch Church to the Governor and Legislators of New York, dated October, 1780, is a perfect example of this attitude. It advances no solution but requests the enforcement of old laws or the making of new ones to remedy the prevailing vice and immorality . . . "to employ their influence to suppress all scandalous and heaven provoking "improprieties." ERNY, VI, 4307-4308.

correspondence it appears that some modifications were made.[141]

The first reaction to the Constitution from members of the Dutch Reformed Church was generally favorable although there are few specific comments to be found. The attitude of the Rev. Georg J. L. Doll, patriotic pastor at Kingston,[142] may perhaps be considered as typical. After George Clinton was inaugurated at Kingston as the first governor of New York, on July 30, 1777, Doll wrote an enthusiastic letter on behalf of the Consistory of his Reformed Church saying:

> . . . while the Constitution is preserved inviolate, and the rulers steer by that conspicuous beacon, the people have the fairest prospect of happiness, unanimity and success. The Consistory esteem themselves happy in having cause to believe that religious liberty (without which all other privileges are not worth enjoying) will be strenuously supported by your Excellency.[143]

Anson P. Stokes considered the religious provisions of the New York Constitution second in importance only to those of Virginia. Not only was the assurance of religious liberty almost complete, but the guaranty given for "all

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[141]Letter J. H. to R. R. Livingston, 17 March 1777, Robert R. Livingston Papers, New York Historical Society.

[142]In 1777, Doll went around with a small likeness of Henry Laurens attached to his hat, with the word "Laurens" underneath. Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. I, No. 6 (September, 1826).

[143]Quoted by John W. Pratt, p. 99, from Marius Schoonmaker, The History of Kingston, New York (New York, 1888), p. 269.

grants of land" and "charters to bodies politic" made by royal authority before 1775 preserved for the Dutch Reformed their educational and philanthropic institutions and the lands they had acquired.[144] Nevertheless, the drafting of the Constitution had been a matter of war-time expediency, and in the first year of peace the Legislature would enact laws under these articles which would be unsatisfactory to the Dutch Church.[145]

On July 2, 1776, New Jersey became the fourth state to adopt a Constitution. The Provincial Assembly, meeting successively in Burlington, Trenton and New Brunswick from May 26, provided for complete religious freedom in Article XVIII:

> That no Person shall ever within this Colony be deprived of the inestimable Privilege of worshipping Almighty God in a Manner agreeable to the Dictates of his own Conscience. . . .

Nor could any citizen be compelled to adhere to any denomination or pay taxes for the support of any church. Although there had been no established church in New Jersey, Article XIX declared:

> That there shall be no establishment of any one religious sect in this Province, in preference to another; and that no Protestant inhabitant of this Colony shall be denied the enjoyment of any civil

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[144]Anson P. I. Stokes, Church and State in the United States (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), I, 405-407.

[145]ERNY, VI, 4331.

right merely on account of his religious principles. . . .[146]

The Pennsylvania Constitution (September 28, 1776) with its guarantee of complete religious freedom affected only a handful of Dutch Reformed churches scattered along the west bank of the Delaware.

At the end of the Revolutionary War, the Dutch Reformed Church was sadly depleted in both human and material resources. The survey of Church conditions which the General Body enjoined upon the Particular Bodies in 1778 had been impossible under the circumstances, and, although the plea was repeated in 1781, such a report was not drafted until 1784. Here is revealed, in part, the destruction wrought by the war upon the Church.

In 1776 there had been one hundred five organized churches and forty-four clergymen to serve them.[147] (There is no way to discover the total number of communicants.) The report of 1784, tallied by Particular Bodies, disclosed that the number of churches had shrunk to eighty-five and

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[146]Boyd, pp. 156-163. For a brief commentary see pages 22-31. Also Marnell, pp. 136-137.

[147]E. T. Corwin, in Centennial Discourses, p. 106. These figures appear to include at least twenty German Reformed churches established between 1700 and 1776, which were under the jurisdiction of the Dutch. Therefore the figure of 81 churches given by David M. Ellis, et al., in A Short History of New York State, p. 67, may be more nearly correct. Gunn, in his Livingston, p. 274, lists the number of Dutch churches as between 70 and 80 at the start of the war, of which "about 40" were in New Jersey.

the number of ministers to thirty-two.[148] Twenty-three of the fifty-three churches in New York were listed without pastors, and thirteen of the thirty-two New Jersey churches were in a similar condition.[149] Needless to say, no new congregations were organized during the years of greatest military activity (1776-1781), although a single church was added in New Jersey in each of the next two years. In the first six years of the war, only three candidates were examined and admitted to the ministry, and this small group was augmented by one in 1782 and three in 1783, while two were admitted from other denominations in 1777.

Of the thirty-two ministers listed, twelve were over fifty years of age, with three others most probably in that category, leaving seventeen below that age. The Report assessed the situation and the prospects very realistically.

> . . . that several of the ministers still occupied, will through old age and other causes, apparently not long be able to engage in the work of the Lord; that the number of additions by reason of the recent

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[148]The Draft Report is in ERNY, VI, 4317-4319. Here again there are discrepancies which I cannot entirely resolve. W. W. Sweet states in Religion in the Development of American Culture, p. 40: "Of the seventy-five Dutch congregations more than thirty were vacant at the war's end." In Robert Baird's older (1844) Religion in America, p. 254, the figures are 82 churches and 30 ministers in 1784. The body of the Report mentions "almost a hundred regularly constituted congregations: under the jurisdiction of the General Body.

[149]For these and other figures, consult chart on following page.

Break-down of Information in the Draft Report of 1784

Particular Body	New York	Albany	Kingston	New Bruns.	Hackensack	Totals
Total congregations	13	21	19	15	17	85*
Vacant congregations	6	10	7	8	5	36
Filled congregations	7	11[b]	12	7	12	49
Total Pastors	5[a]	8[b]	8	5	6	32
Outstanding congregations not under Union of 1771-1772	0	1	3 (1 vac.)	0	0	4

[a]One clergyman listed as emeritus; should be two (De Ronde and Ritzema; both continued to preach, but not in New York City).

[b]Barent Vrooman was listed as emeritus, but had in fact died (1783) by the time of the report.

*Each of three double congregations is considered and figured as one.

> lamentable war are very small, and that, consequently, the lack of ministers is rather increasing than otherwise, there being not more than two licentiates to supply the existing deficiency; that according to the reports of the Rev. Brethren, for the two following years there are no candidates to be expected, whilst at the same time, the suffering congregations daily find their danger and afflictions increased, partly by the lack of licentiates, partly by the floods of error, infidelity, and all kinds of irreligion, which are everywhere bursting upon the land.[150]

These conditions were candidly presented to the Classis of Amsterdam also, in the first American communication after the war.[151]

The loss by attrition for the individual congregations is impossible to assess with any precision.[152] Random records supply a few examples which may be taken as indicative. In the Millstone, New Jersey church, Christian Foering received eighteen new members in the first year and a half of his ministry. During the next three years, until his death, March 29, 1779, not a single new member was recorded.[153] On the other hand, Foering's successor, Solomon Froeligh, a fugitive from Long Island, added thirty-one new members in 1781 and 1782.[154] The New Brunswick church

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[150] ERNY, VI, 4319.

[151] Ibid., 4324.

[152] No statistical accounting of membership by churches was provided for until after 1809.

[153] E. T. Corwin, Historical Discourse, Millstone, p. 49.

[154] E. T. Corwin, Sermon on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Settlement of Edward T. Corwin

listed no additions from 1773 to 1779.[155] As was the case in New York City, thousands of persons never returned to the communities from which they fled; many of these found no Dutch church at hand, and so passed into other denominations, while others dropped their religious affiliations entirely.

The Dutch Reformed churches suffered extensive material damage during the Revolutionary years, whether from intentional destruction, misuse or neglect, and all were in miserable condition by 1783. Both British and Americans appropriated Dutch churches for military purposes for varying periods of time. This was inevitable because church structures were the largest buildings in any community. With the ecclesiastical furniture removed, they were easily adapted to many purposes.

At least a dozen Dutch churches were intentionally destroyed by British and Indian action in New York and New Jersey and services were suspended in at least as many more which were appropriated to other uses.[156] On Staten Island (the area first occupied and last evacuated) the churches at Richmond and Port Richmond were razed, as was the building

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as Pastor of the Reformed Church of Hillsborough at Millstone, N. J. (Somerville, N. J.: n.p., 1884), pp. 10-11.

[155]Todd in Centennial Discourses, p. 231.

[156]J. Franklin Jameson, The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926), p. 92, says fifty churches were destroyed during the Revolution, throughout America.

at Success (present Manhasset) on Long Island. The one at Raritan was burned to the ground, while only the blackened walls were left standing at Millstone. The greatest destruction occurred in the frontier towns of the Mohawk Valley, were Joseph Brant and his warriors put the torch to churches at Fonda, Canajoharie, Stone Arabia, Middleburg and Scoharie, mostly in 1780. Doll's church at Kingston was shelled and burned in 1778, as British warships systematically bombarded the town.

Appropriation and misuse of the churches in the Tory-dominated section of lower New York produced almost as much damage. In New York City, disastrous fires in 1776 and 1778 destroyed at least a quarter of the buildings, including Trinity church. Consequently covered space was at a premium. Although the Commandant, Robertson, at first promised that no churches of any denomination would be disturbed, the Dissenting and non-Anglican churches were taken over as needed and used for secular purposes.[157] The North Dutch church at Fulton and Williams Streets was emptied of its furnishings and used first to house some eight hundred prisoners from Long Island and Fort Washington and then as a hospital and for storage; the pews were used for

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[157]Oscar T. Barck, New York City During the War for Independence, with Special Reference to the Period of British Occupation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 161. The Americans had removed all the church bells in 1776 when they retreated.

firewood.[158] Serving successively as prison, hospital, riding school and barracks, the Middle Dutch church at Nassau and Liberty Streets endured the most alteration and abuse. At first a floor was laid from gallery to gallery and the building packed with prisoners. A year later the windows were removed, the shutters left unhung, the floors taken up, and the bare ground covered with tanbark.[159] In the centre a hurdle was placed for horses to jump over, and the arena was used to train the dragoons' horses. At a later date, it appears, Hessian troops replaced the horses quartered there.[160] Old South church, on Garden Street, came off best; it was used only for about four months as a hospital and then, for some reason, closed during the remainder of the occupation.[161]

Many of the churches on Long Island were treated in a similar fashion. At New Utrecht the church was used at different times as hospital and riding stable. Some of the dispossessed members were given Sunday passes by the British

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[158] Benson J. Lossing, Pictorial Field Book of the American Revolution (2 vols.; New York: Harper Brothers, 1859), II, 659.

[159] Thomas Jones, I, 22-23 and 423, ascribed this especially harsh treatment to the fact it was Laidlie's "English Dutch Church." There may be an element of truth in this statement.

[160] Barck, p. 163.

[161] Ibid.

to attend services at Flatbush.[162] The congregation at Bushwick earned the displeasure of Lord Howe by caring for American wounded in their sanctuary, and the building was closed between 1776 and 1783.[163] The interior of the Jamaica church was cleared and used as a barracks and storehouse, while the one at Newtown (present Elmhurst) served as a powder magazine.

Across the bay in northern New Jersey and trans-Hudson New York there was a great deal of military action from which the churches suffered. When the British occupied New Brunswick in 1776 and 1777, services in the church were suspended and the pews removed. Hard usage, first as a hospital and then as a stable, left the building in a deplorable condition when the British withdrew in June. Temporary repairs were made and services resumed, the Reformed sharing the building on alternate Sundays with the Presbyterians, whose church had been burnt. A thorough restoration occurred only in 1787.[164] At Belleville (Second

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[162]David S. Sutphen, and T. G. Bergen, Reproduction of the Historical Discourse, Delivered on the 18th October, 1877, at the Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Reformed Dutch Church of New Utrecht, Long Island, by Rev. David S. Sutphen, pastor of the Church; And an Historical Address by Hon. Teunis G. Bergen (no place: published by the Consistory, [1877?]), p. 11.

[163]Edward Niles, "Bushwick and Gravesend," in Tercentenary Studies, pp. 46-47.

[164]John Howard Raven, "The Church and its Institutions in New Brunswick, New Jersey," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 231.

River), lying in the heart of the foraging area, services were held irregularly; the absence of church records for the period was blamed on British destruction.[165] The Ponds church was used as a court house, substituting for the one burned at Hackensack.

On the west side of the Hudson, the Fishkill church had an interesting and varied war-time history. Early in the war the Americans incarcerated British prisoners there, and long afterward iron bars remained over the windows as a reminder of this use. From this makeshift prison the spy, Enoch Crosby, escaped, an incident which provided Cooper with material for the character, Harvey Birch, in his novel The Spy. Here, too, the New York Constitutional Convention met for about six months. First called to order in the Anglican Trinity church, the assembly found the deserted building so befouled by pigeons that they adjourned to the Reformed church "down the street" for their deliberations.[166] Puffed up with this unexpected honor, the congregation at a later date rather immodestly offered their building as a meeting place for representatives from the thirteen states.

Twice during the war Dutch churches emerged into prominence as the scenes of military courts. At Paramus (modern Ridgewood), New Jersey, the trial court of General

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[165] B. C. Taylor, p. 303.

[166] Jay Monaghan, John Jay (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1935), p. 89 and note 8.

Charles Lee was held in 1778, after it had been transferred from Morristown. Lafayette, Von Steuben and Wayne testified against him, while General Henry Knox was among his defenders. More famous was the trial of Major Andre in 1780 in the little red brick church at Tappan, (then called Orangetown or Orangeburgh), New York. Here, with General Greene presiding, a Board of Officers, consisting of six major generals and eight brigadiers sentenced Andre to death.[167]

The course of the Revolutionary War, as it moved toward a triumphant conclusion from the late autumn of 1781, was reflected in the activities of the Dutch churches. To this point, the exiles and refugees had responded to the occasional American victory with hopes for an early return to home and community, only to be disappointed by subsequent events. Bonfires had lit up the Hudson Valley in celebration of Saratoga, but there was usually little cause for rejoicing except the passing of another miserable year, or the anniversary of a proclaimed but still uncertain independence.

On October 23, 1781, the British in New York City heard random firing across the bay in New Jersey, as if in celebration of a victory, and the surrender of Cornwallis

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[167]Benson J. Lossing, The Two Spies: Nathan Hale and John Andre (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1899), pp. 97-103; Pictorial Field Book of the American Revolution, I, 760-764. The church was torn down in 1836 and replaced by another.

at Yorktown was confirmed for them the next day during an exchange of prisoners.[168] News of the victory reached upstate New York within ten days after it happened, and was greeted in the churches with Psalms of Deliverance and Sermons of Thanksgiving. At Katsbaan, a community of small scattered farms near Kingston, the people gathered in the old stone church to hear the exiled Lambertus De Ronde preach an appropriate sermon in Dutch on "the success which has crowned our arms."[169] Across and down the river at Poughkeepsie, Governor Clinton and the legislature were in session. Together with the mostly Dutch inhabitants of the town they attended services in the Dutch church, where another exile, John Henry Livingston, "officiated in a solemn manner to express their joy and gratitude to the Almighty for this final interposition in our favor."[170] At Kingston, too, the people of the township gathered to hear Reverend Doll deliver "an excellent address suited to the occasion."[171]

In the months that followed, while military action dwindled away and peace terms were being negotiated, Washington traveled up the Hudson to visit the frontier and

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[168]Wertenbaker, Father Knickerbocker Rebels, p. 244.

[169]Brink, p. 192.

[170]The New York Journal and the General Advertiser, Number 1918, November 12, 1781. The services were held on Monday, October 29.

[171]Ibid. Delivered on November 2, 1782.

advanced posts in New York. At least a half-dozen Dutch churches still treasure personal replies which Washington addressed to them in answer to their memorials of appreciation and praise. At Albany, Rev. Eilardus Westerlo enjoyed the thrill of presenting the welcoming address on behalf of the community.

The preliminary peace treaty was signed on November 30, 1782, but word did not reach New York City until March 25 of the following year. The Loyalist exodus had already begun to Nova Scotia although most of them still remained to be evacuated before the British troops could be withdrawn. Washington and Governor Clinton met General Guy Carleton in the home of a Mr. Dewint, outside Orangeburgh (Tappan), New York, and worked out details for the withdrawal of civilians and troops from Westchester County, Long and Staten Islands, and New York City.[172] Already some of the wartime refugees had begun to slip back into the City with the hope of regaining their former possessions; upwards of two thousand were reported there by April 19, with no food or lodging available except from neighboring farmers.[173] Those who returned early were permitted to inspect but not to claim or occupy their property. The majority, however, waited impatiently until the evacuation was nearly completed.

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[172]Wertenbaker, Father Knickerbocker Rebels, p. 258.

[173]Ibid., p. 257. Wertenbaker cites the Diary of William Smith, of that date. See also Gunn, p. 266.

Meanwhile, the departure of the civilian expatriates continued all through the summer and early autumn. Finally, it was the turn of the troops, who embarked from New York as Washington, Clinton and the troops entered the City from the north. Ten days later the whole area was clear; the last transports sailed down the bay on December 4, carrying the remnants of the garrisons on Long Island and Staten Island.

On November 23, "it having pleased the Lord to restore peace to America," Dr. Livingston preached a farewell sermon to his adopted congregation at Poughkeepsie, and returned to the pastorate in New York City from which he had fled seven years earlier. There, he almost certainly reopened his ministry a week later, on November 30.[174] Of the quartet of Dutch Reformed ministers serving the Collegiate church in 1776, he was the only one to return. Laidlie had died in 1778; the aged De Ronde and Ritzema were not permitted to return despite their loud protests.[175]

The first services were held in the hastily-prepared Old South or Garden Street church--the only possible place, since it was relatively undamaged, having been used only

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[174]Most of the evidence points to this date. The statement cited in ERNY, VI, 4309, is most certainly wrong in claiming that Livingston " . . . opened his ministry again in the City of New York, December 7, 1783." See, for instance, Gunn, pp. 266-269.

[175]The reasons why De Ronde and Ritzema were not recalled will be dealt with later.

four months as a hospital.[176] The interiors of the two other Dutch churches had been ruined by the British. According to an existing and veracious account, the last of the British soldiers were still in the area, and (whether out of piety or boredom) there was a sprinkling of redcoats in the congregation which filled the church. The interest of the officers turned to dismay when Dr. Livingston rose in the pulpit, announced the Twenty-first Psalm, and read all the verses before the congregation sang it.

In Thee, great God, with songs of praise
  Our favoured realms rejoyce;
And, blest with Thy salvation, raise
  To heaven their cheerful voice.

Thy sure defence, from foes around,
  Hath spread our rising name;
And all our feeble efforts crowned
  With freedom and with fame.

In deep distress our injured land
  Implored Thy power to save;
For peace we prayed; Thy bounteous hand
  The timely blessing gave.

Thy mighty arm, eternal Power,
  Opposed their deadly aim;
In mercy swept them from our shore,
  And spread their sails with shame.[177]

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[176]Barck, p. 163.

[177]The last two verses are omitted. The verses are from the pen of Joel Barlow (date unknown), and are to be found with minor variations. These are from The Psalms and Hymns, with the Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy, of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in North America (New York: Board of Publication of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, 1860), pp. 44-45. Authority for this incident is Francis Kip (later Episcopal Bishop of California), son of Elder Leonard Kip of the Collegiate Church. Cf. John A. Todd, Centennial Discourses, pp. 136-137.

Of the organ given by Governor Burnet in 1728 there was not a sign. Presumably it suffered the same fate ascribed to the new pulpit in the North Dutch church, which had been dismantled and removed to England.

The Consistory of the three Collegiate churches met on December 2, 1783, and approved a resolution of gratitude and thanksgiving for success in the struggle for independence, and for safe return to their homes.[178] They declared De Ronde and Ritzema, both of whom preached exclusively in Dutch, to be ministers emeriti, and pensioned them off.[179] As the new year opened, the Consistory took up the task of material and spiritual reconstruction for the churches in the City--a task which, indeed, faced all the congregations, ecclesiastical bodies and institutions of the Dutch Reformed Church.

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[178]Thomas De Witt, A Discourse Delivered in the North Reformed Dutch Church (Collegiate) in the City of New York, on the last sabbath of August, 1856 (New York: Board of Publications, 1857), p. 98.

[179]Ibid., p. 41.

CHAPTER V

POST-REVOLUTIONARY PROBLEMS

In the 1780's, a series of nagging problems confronted the Church. The scope of reconstruction involved not only the rebuilding and repair of destroyed or ruinous property, but also the moral and spiritual restoration of the scattered congregations. After a long vacation, the suspended schools needed re-opening; a generation of children which had never heard the schoolbell required exposure to sums and catechism. Whether the Church, with its small resources, should support Queens or a separate theological professorate was debated for a decade, without profit to the institutions or credit to the Church. Doctrinal and associational relationships with other denominations required definition, now that all enjoyed legal equality. Indeed, the adjustment to American laws demanded an examination of the Church's position vis-a-vis the state and local governments as well as the proper national government. All this was a direct result of the war and the subsequent independence.[1]

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[1]Two other major problems, the completion of

The most pressing problem, of course, was reconstruction. The rehabilitation of church buildings and property proceeded gradually through most of the post-war decade. Lack of funds, both in rural and urban areas, dictated a slow pace; currency was scarce, depreciated and confusing in value. Uncertain economic conditions made people hesitant to mortgage the future. Despite a brief boom which lasted until 1785, a decline in trade and commerce began which continued well into 1788, seriously affecting New York City and its hinterland.[2] In the City itself, there was a great demand for building materials, which were as scarce as the money to buy them. At least eight hundred homes had been destroyed in the two great fires which had swept away one-third of the City. As almost no building had taken place during the war, the sites were still covered with piles of plaster rubble and broken brick in 1784.[3] High rents and high prices, partly resulting from the activities of speculators, drove many people out of the area.

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independence from the Netherlands Church, and the response of the Dutch Church to the American frontier, will be discussed in later chapters.

[2]Ernest W. Spaulding, New York in the Critical Period, 1783-1789. "New York State Historical Association Series" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 139.

[3]McMaster, I, 52-56; Spaulding, New York in the Critical Period, p. 12, quotes Croevecoeur's too high estimate that 1700 homes were destroyed.

In New York City, only three churches (Anglican, Methodist and Moravian) had escaped misappropriation or flame. Of the three Dutch churches, the South church on Garden street suffered least and was the first to re-open despite its delapidation. Here, the united congregations worshiped while the other two churches were repaired. One of the first decisions of the Consistory of the Collegiate Church was to rebuild the pews and seats in the North church and to restore the structure "to its former convenience and splendor as soon as possible."[4] A three-man committee was appointed to purchase the necessary lumber. This was no easy task because of the lack of funds. Although the church was a creditor, it could not collect from the debtors, and its members were impoverished. A subscription list was circulated, not only in the City but in the Long Island counties as well, on the unjustified theory that, having been within British lines, the people there might have been more prosperous. The Consistory finally had to borrow money to complete the restoration. After ten months of work, the church was re-opened on September 26, 1784, with

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[4] Liber "G", Consistory Record of the Collegiate Church in New York City, under date of 16 December, 1783, p. 5. Examined through the courtesy of Mr. Robert Williams of the Marble Collegiate Church Office, John Street, New York City. Earlier, on December 2, the Consistory ordered Mr. Theophilius Elsworth, an elder, to hire persons to clean the church and to superintend their work.

Dr. Livingston (the only Reformed pastor in New York City) preaching the sermon.[5]

The entire interior of the Middle church had been destroyed, leaving little more than four walls and a roof. Requiring so large an outlay of funds, it was allowed to stand unused in this condition until 1788, when its restoration began. As the work progressed, Dr. Livingston wrote to Dr. Hardenbergh at Raritan:

> As to the exertions of the Dutch Church in New-York, much may be said in apology for a people which has been ruined by the war, and are now still straining every nerve to rebuild their demolished temples. Their wealth is greatly diminished, and it is not in their power to patronize public objects with the same liberality which, before the war, would have been practicable for them.[6]

To complete the renovation, "a fine large organ, made in this country," was placed at the south end.[7] Once again, Dr. Livingston was called to preach the sermon at the rededication, which was held appropriately on the Fourth of July, 1790. He recalled the sufferings of the war years,

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[5]Talbot W. Chambers, "Memorial Discourse," in The Collegiate Dutch Church: Proceedings at the Centennial Anniversary of the Dedication of the North Dutch Church, May 25th, 1869; At the Laying of the Cornerstone of the New Church in Fifth Avenue, Corner Forty-Eighth Street on the same day (New York: Published by the Consistory of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the City of New York, 1869), p. 23.

[6]Gunn, p. 305. Dated March 4, 1790.

[7]Henricus Selyns, Records of Domine Henricus Selyns of New York, 1686-1687. With Notes and Remarks by Garret Abeel Written a Century Later, 1791-1792, Collections of the Holland Society, Vol. V (New York: Published by The Holland Society of New York, 1916), p. 38.

compared Washington to Joshua, and paid a moving tribute to his dead colleague, Laidlie.[8]

Despite the clamor of saw and hammer in the early period of rebuilding New York, one sound was noticeably lacking: there were no church bells. They had all been removed about the time of Howe's arrival in 1776, and laboriously carted off to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for safe-keeping. During the war, a Tory raiding party had plundered a bell from the parish of Westfield, New Jersey, and hung it in the steeple of the South church on Garden Street. By some unknown means, the church at Westfield located the bell after the war, and sent representatives to ask for its return. Members of the New York Consistory, admitting that it had never been their property, agreed to take it down and deliver it, but requested its use a little longer.

> . . . as the Bells belonging to the several churches of this city are not yet restored, and are in pennsylvania at a great distance from this place, and the safety of the city in case of fires may in some measure depend upon having some Bell to give an alarm to the Inhabitants, the Consistory request of Mr. Woodruff and Mr. Crane that their bell may remain until the spring of the year when the City Bells can be obtained. to this those gentlemen consented.[9]

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[8]Thomas De Witt, pp. 79-82, Note "F," with extracts of the sermon; anonymous monograph, "Tercentenary of the City of New York, 1696-1926"; and Martha J. Lamb, "Historic Homes and Landmarks; Their Significance and Present Condition." Magazine of American History, XXII, No. 3 (Sept., 1889), p. 193.

[9]Liber "G", pp. 5, 16.

When Thomas Woodruff appeared in March, 1784 to claim the bell for his parish, the New York bells were still in Pennsylvania, and he agreed to let the Westfield bell hang where it was "until the last day of May."

In the smaller towns of New York and in the rural areas, repair and reconstruction also preceeded at an uneven tempo. Work on the church at New Utrecht was begun in 1783 and gradually completed at a cost of five hundred pounds, continental currency. Flatlands and Flatbush waited until 1794 to replace their old church, while Jamaicans held services in their homes until the completion of a new brick building in 1789. The burned-out church at Port Richmond on Staten Island was rebuilt in 1785. At Harlem the congregation used their delapidated church until 1788, and then worshiped in a barn until a new structure was completed in 1791. The Fishkill church was enlarged and redecorated in 1786.

The twenty-five to thirty churches in New Jersey were in no better condition. At Millstone, Somerset County, the Consistory had no funds to restore their useless building. They broadcast an appeal for help that is preserved in their Consistory Minutes:

> Whereas the Dutch Reformed Congregation of New Millstone, . . . has been much distressed by the late destructive war, the habitants plundered of their property, their church in part destroyed, and rendered useless; and whereas said congregation is by such sufferings rendered in a manner incapable of repairing their church: --We the subscribers, Elders and Deacons

> of said congregation find ourselves under the dis-agreeable necessity of applying for assistance to the brethren of our profession, and especially to those whom a kind Providence has protected against similar distress; who from pure motives of sympathy, we trust, will be induced to charity and benevolence.[10]

Their appeals, along with the promise to perpetuate the names of their benefactors in the church records, secured for them a very inadequate eighty-five pounds (about two-hundred twelve dollars). At Paramus, a thorough repair of the church was made the responsibility of the congregational members. The Consistory called them all to meet on Saturday, July 23, 1785, to decide how to restore the decay and desolation "occasioned by the recent war."[11]

Very often, the need for money forced the churches to revise ancient customs. They abandoned the use of rough benches along the walls for the men, and the seating of women and children in the center of the church. Instead, pews were installed and pew rent was charged to raise the funds needed to pay for the repairs. In the North church in New York City, pews which had been set apart for the use of former elders and deacons were withdrawn and rented like the rest.[12] Barns served the devastated and impoverished

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[10]E. T. Corwin, Historic Discourse, Millstone, pp. 61-62, 87.

[11]Theodore B. Romeyn, Historical Discourse Delivered on Occasion of the Re-opening and Dedication of the First Reformed (Dutch) Church at Hackensack, N. J., May 2, 1869 (New York: Board of Publication, Reformed Church in America, 1870), pp. 24-25.

[12]T. W. Chambers, p. 24.

communities of the Mohawk Valley as churches for more than a decade after the peace.

The scarcity of currency, especially of "small money," in the early 1780's resulted in meager offerings collected at the church services. Rev. Dirck Romeyn at Schenectady developed a solution to this problem which was adopted by several other churches in the area. "Church money" was issued; the church printed promissory notes in small denominations which could be exchanged for larger values and dropped in the collection bags or plates. The idea became so popular that merchants accepted these notes and later "cashed" them at the church.[13]

It proved far easier for the Dutch Church to restore the physical ravages than to recapture the spiritual vigor and reclaim its pre-war membership; these were not only wartime casualties but were also continuing problems. At the close of the Revolution the four largest and most powerful denominations in America were, in order, the Congregationalist, Anglican, Baptist and Presbyterian. The Dutch Reformed Church was seventh, following the Lutherans and even the German Reformed.[14] Its total number of

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[13]Birch, pp. 96-98. Three examples of "church money" are reproduced on page 97--two- three- and fourpence notes.

[14]Sidney E. Mead, The Lively Experiment (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 106-107. The whole of Chapter VI, "Denominationalism: The Shape of Protestantism in America," is extremely informative and pertinent.

congregations had declined from one hundred five in 1776 to about eighty-five in 1783-84, and its ministers from forty-four to thirty-two. In the middle colonies, however, their position was quite different, particularly in New York where the Dutch denomination continued to lead with fifty-five churches and twenty-one ministers. For the thirty-two churches in New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania there were only eleven ministers.[15]

Although about half the population of the City did not return after the British evacuation,[16] the decline of the Dutch Church there did not result wholly from that fact; it was contributory, however. There is more than a hint to indicate that the delay until 1790 in re-opening the Middle Dutch church was due more to a lack of parishioners than money. In the two churches ready for services at the end of 1784, the congregations were slow to reach their pre-war

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[15]ERNY, VI, 4319-4321. The Reformed figures are taken from the Church survey of 1783-1784. Yet David D. Demarest in his book The Reformed Church in America, Its Origin, Development and Characteristics (4th ed., rev. and enlarged; New York: Board of Publications of the Reformed Church in America, 1889), pp. 199-200, gives 82 churches and 30 ministers. Here again, estimates of the relative rank and size of all denominations vary greatly. Spaulding, New York in the Critical Period, p. 33, places the Dutch Reformed second to the Episcopalians, with the Presbyterians third. In New York City the Dutch Reformed were the most numerous, according to Thomas E. V. Smith, The City of New York in the Year of Washington's Inauguration, 1789 (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph and Co., 1889), p. 129.

[16]Barck, p. 229. He estimated the population figures for New York City at 21,000 in 1771; 12,000 in 1783; and 23,614 in August, 1786.

size. "In fact, the membership of the Reformed Church in New York City continually declined and no new members were added during the 1790's."[17] Many people had lost the church-going habit and it was difficult to draw them back into the church; there also appears to have been a continuous drift from the Dutch into the Episcopal Church, which had already begun to re-organize in the middle colonies at the start of 1784.[18]

Due to the lack of available funds, ministers, and--ostensibly--of parishioners, Dr. Livingston carried the burden of the City ministry by himself for six years, and there were no regular services in Dutch during that period. The "Old Dutch" faction was forced to give up the control of money, property and records which had been granted to them by General Howe during the occupation. The recipients were those who had followed Laidlie and had won control in the court case before the war, and who now returned to claim it again. By a legislative act the "Old Dutch" treasurer was compelled to refund "every farthing" that he had received of the revenues of the Corporation during the whole period of the rebellion.[19] It is likely that some of those displaced

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[17]United States Works Progress Administration. Inventory of the Church Archives of New York City, Reformed Church in America (New York: The Historical Records Survey, 1939), p. 9. Despite the growth of New York City, a fourth Dutch church was not added until 1808.

[18]Humphrey, pp. 209-210.

[19]T. E. V. Smith, p. 23.

were among the number which shifted their membership to the Episcopalian or Presbyterian churches.

On Long Island, the four collegiate churches of Queen's County at first had no regular pastor, but by 1785 were able to call the Rev. Rynier Van Nest. His long labor there gradually helped to restore the congregations, but there were few additions to membership.[20] The six collegiate churches of King's County were faced with a similar situation. They secured Martinus Schoonmaker as pastor in 1784, but in the face of the English and English-speaking preponderance there, were forced to add an English-preaching colleague in 1787, because Schoonmaker could preach only in Dutch. Here, as in the more isolated rural churches, the continued use of a "foreign" language hindered the growth of the church. None of these Long Island churches was strong enough to go its own way until 1824, when the collegiate system was relinquished in both counties.[21]

The statistics showing new members attracted to the Dutch Church during the post-war years, although scattered and incomplete, are not impressive, and tend to confirm the view that they were relatively few. The church at Bellville, New Jersey, received twenty-three converts in the

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[20] Ibid., p. 9.

[21] Oscar Maddaus, "The Collegiate Churches of Queen's County," and J. Frederic Berg, "The Collegiate Churches of King's County," in Tercentenary Studies, pp. 62 and 41-42, respectively.

period 1784 to 1794--an average of about two per year.[22] At Ghent, New York, the church gained forty-six members between 1775 (the year of its founding) and 1790; this is not spectacular if one considers that to form a congregation they must have had at least ten or fifteen members, with families.[23] The Millstone, New Jersey, church gained six between 1781 and 1784.[24] As late as 1800, the General Synod lamented the decline of religious interest in a Pastoral Letter:

> We cannot but regret, while we are obliged to remind you of the small number of conversions which have of late years taken place, of the few accessions of professors [of the faith] even to the visible church . . .[25]

Many congregations were sadly in arrears with the ministers' salaries because the shrunken membership could not carry the burden. In every community there were people who wanted the benefits--the services of the church in baptism, marriage and burial--without the responsibilities of membership and maintenance. At New Hackensack, New York, the Consistory in exasperation declared that those not of the Dutch congregation or paying for the support of the minister had to pay the sexton eight shillings for burial in

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[22]B. C. Taylor, p. 304.

[23]Herbert B. Roberts, "The Church in Columbia County," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 304.

[24]E. T. Corwin, Historic Discourse, New Millstone, p. 62.

[25]Acts and Proceedings, I, 305.

the churchyard.[26] In the Classis of Kingston, visitation of the churches could not be carried out because of the small number of members.[27]

Naturally the war left scars on the Dutch school system as deep as those left on church property and the ministry. The first step in the restoration of parochial education occurred on the local level with the grammar schools. The Collegiate Church School in New York City, which dated back to 1633, is perhaps the best documented if not the most typical example. More than two months before the British evacuation, the Consistory resolved:

> That Mr. Peter Van Steenburgh, who was the public schoolmaster of this congregation at the commencement of the war, and is again returned to this city, shall be considered as bound by his former call, and shall have permission to dwell in the school-house, and open his school in the large room built for that purpose.[28]

The school re-opened in March, 1784, with ten students; because of the meager funds, this number increased only to twelve by the end of 1788.[29]

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[26]Maria B. C. Tower, (ed.), The Records of the Reformed Dutch Church of New Hackensack, Dutchess County, New York. Collections of the Dutchess County Historical Society, V (New York: n.p., 1932), p. 170.

[27]Minutes of the Kingston Classis, May, 1786. Microfilm Roll 310 P, Western Theological Seminary. My translation.

[28]Dunshee, p. 65. Here the date given is September 7, 1783. Liber "G" of the Consistory Minutes, which Dunshee cites, gives December 2.

[29]Dunshee, p. [91]. The highest number of students at the school before 1776 was twenty. For comparison,

Until its suspension in 1776, the school had been referred to as the Public, Free, or Low Dutch School. Now it imitated the Episcopal Charity School, and adopted the use of the word "charity" to describe its pupils in order to play upon the hearts and purse strings of voluntary contributors.[30] A gradual improvement in economic conditions was reflected by an increasing number of free pupils. When the school was re-organized in December, 1788, the Consistory agreed to pay Van Steenburgh thirty-five pounds a year to educate thirty free scholars. At the same time, because the Consistory was still low in funds, he was permitted to take thirty paying pupils in addition. The number of free students increased to fifty in 1791 and to seventy in 1800.[31]

In April, 1789, the Consistory adopted regulations which brought the school under extremely close supervision of Church officers. The school was visited each month by the deacons, who formed a standing committee for that

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Evarts B. Greene and Virginia T. Harrington, in American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790 (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966), p. 104, show 22,000 residents of New York City and County in 1789, of which 10,000 were below age sixteen. According to T. E. V. Smith, pp. 195-197, there were more than fifty-five teachers of various kinds in the City in 1789, each with probably from ten to twenty pupils.

[30]Dunshee, p. 65. The Episcopalians had used this term since 1748; several other denominations took up its use after the Revolution.

[31]Ibid., 91. For conflicting figures see p. 70.

purpose, and quarterly by the whole Consistory.[32] The device of annual "Charity Sermons," at which voluntary collections were taken, appeared at the end of that year. The money contributed was used to clothe the free students and pay their tuition; the teacher's salary and operating expenses came from the general fund of the Consistory. The first Charity Sermon was preached in Dutch in the North church on December 17, with contributions totalling $216.05.[33] A week later a similar service was held in English at the South church. President Washington was in the City at the time and sent ten dollars to Dr. Livingston as a donation for the school.[34] Other groups appear to have contributed also; on the Fourth of July, 1791, the Tammany Society heard a patriotic sermon by Dr. Linn, and a collection was taken for the charity school.[35]

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[32]T. E. V. Smith, p. 135.

[33]Dunshee, p. 167. A year later the sums collected were: Old Dutch church (a small congregation), ten pounds; New Dutch church, sixty-three pounds, seventeen shillings; North Dutch church, sixty-seven pounds, twenty-one shillings. For comparison of Reformed, Episcopalian and Presbyterian Charity schools, see The New York Magazine or Literary Repository, Vol. I, Number 12 (Dec., 1790) and Vol. II, Number I (Jan., 1791), University Microfilms, American Periodicals, Series I, Reel 21.

[34]The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, ed. by J. C. Fitzpatrick (39 vols.; Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931-1934), XXX, 485, note 75, dated December 24, 1789. Hereafter, Writings of George Washington.

[35]New York Magazine or Literary Repository, Vol. II, No. 7 (July, 1791), p. 423.

On Sundays, the pupils gathered at their schoolroom on Garden Street and attended church in a body.[36] On the occasions of the Charity Sermons, they sang a hymn which every year was specifically composed for the event.[37] Beginning in 1792, a hand-written diploma or certificate was awarded to those completing their studies. About the same time a female instructor was hired, and the girls placed under her care.[38] After a decade of recovery, the way was further eased for the school when Elias Brevoort left a bequest of seven hundred fifty dollars, which marked the beginning of a trust fund. A second bequest of fifty four hundred dollars was made ten years later (in 1802) by Miss Sara De Peyster and placed the school in a comfortable position.[39]

Of the state of the common schools associated with churches in the smaller towns and rural areas, little is known but much can be inferred. Not only was there a shortage of funds, but also of teachers and teaching materials. The Kingston Classis complained, for instance, of the shortage of printed Catechism books.[40] Probably the most

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[36]Dunshee, p. 83.

[37]Ibid., p. 68 and note. The use of Charity Sermons was continued until 1865.

[38]Ibid., p. 69.

[39]Ibid., p. 85 and note.

[40]Minutes of the Kingston Classis, Microfilm Roll 310 P, dated April 6, 1785. (In Dutch)

successful of all these elementary schools was the Grammar School connected with Queens. When that College was forced to suspend operations in 1795, the Grammar School was deemed worthy of maintenance, and through good management gained a reputation which drew pupils from as far away as Tennessee.[41]

Prior to the Revolution, education in the Dutch communities had been carried on by the minister, the church clerk, or some other pious person. Shrunken congregations, lack of support, and an increasingly heterogeneous community made it difficult to resume education in the old sectarian manner. Church leaders were greatly troubled over the future of parochial education, due to the uncertainties caused by governmental action[42] and the prevailing secularism. This concern was expressed in the drafting of the Church Constitution between 1788 and 1792:

> The zeal of the Reformed Church for initiating children early in the truth cannot be evidenced in the same manner in America where many denominations of Christians, and some who do not even profess the Christian religion inhabit promiscuously; and where School-masters can seldom be found who are members of the church.[43]

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[41] Schmidt, p. 18.

[42] The Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 carried provisions for education in Northwest Territory; this was also the time when Jefferson, Madison, Rush and Noah Webster were gestating educational ideas tuned to the needs of the new nation.

[43] Explanatory Article LVI, in E. T. Corwin, Digest, pp. lxiii-lxiv.

The "Church Fathers" conceded that the conditions prevailing in the Netherlands under provisions of the Synod of Dort, and in colonial British America, no longer applied. Nevertheless they strove to achieve a sort of moral isolation, advised caution in hiring sober and moral teachers for the community, and approved a recommendation:

> that parents endeavour to prevail upon School-Masters to make the children belonging to the Dutch Church, commit to memory, and publicly repeat in the school, one section of the Heidelberg Catechism, at least once every week.[44]

In accommodation to the new educational environment, the Reformed Church moved slowly--but it moved. As early as 1782, Governor Clinton urged the legislature to establish schools, and within five years a public school system was proposed. As the result of legislative action in 1795, fifty thousand dollars was appropriated annually for five years to encourage elementary schools, so that by 1799 there were more than thirteen hundred grammar schools with nearly sixty thousand pupils enrolled.[45] The Collegiate Church School shared in this grant in 1795 and 1796, and was able temporarily to increase its students by twenty. When the funds were not renewed in 1800, the Consistory ordered a decrease in the number of students. The cheap and utilitarian methods of the Lancastrian system,

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[44] Ibid.

[45] David M. Ellis, et al., p. 199.

introduced by the New York Free School Society in 1806, were adopted by the Church School on January 1, 1809. However, the religious emphasis was maintained as the ministers continued to catechize the pupils.[46]

At the same time that the Dutch Church was trying to rebuild from the ashes, she was deeply involved in trying to define her proper relationship to the other religious persuasions. In general she was more sympathetic and cooperative with kindred Calvinist denominations, and less friendly toward all forms of Arminianism and Rationalism.

One method of meeting some of the larger problems of the post-war era was through inter-denominational association. Seemingly, this device was contrary to the far stronger trend toward denominationalism which was generated by the new Church-State relationships. However, in the weakened Churches, these two tendencies could exist side by side. Denominationalism tended to divide American Protestantism into left and right wings. The liberals, pietistic and revivalist, were increasingly inclined toward oversimplified doctrine, more emotional techniques, and Arminian theology. The conservative right-wing, to which the Dutch Reformed belonged, continued to emphasize the purity of an intellectualized doctrine and the maintenance of church discipline and order. Despite mutual suspicion of their widely divergent attitudes, both wings were able to join

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[46]Dunshee, p. 70.

forces in their common opposition to the spread of scientific Rationalism and Deism.

The inroads made by Rationalism upon the orthodox Churches were indeed alarming, and continued well into the next decade. The Presbyterians shared the extreme concern of the Dutch Reformed over what was commonly referred to as "the rise of infidelity." At Princeton in 1782, it was reported there were only two students who professed to be Christians.[47] Two years later, the President of the Queen's Trustees, John Neilson, wrote to the General Synod to complain of "the rapid and amazing increase of deism, irreligion and latitudinarian principles. . . . "[48] And Lyman Beecher, who graduated from Yale in 1796, commented that "most of the classes before me were infidels, and called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert."[49]

The troubles of the period were not alleviated by the proclamation of denominational prayer-days. The

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[47]Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 324. Ashbel Green said that in his senior year he was the "only professing Christian" among the students, and "a number were grossly profane." (The other Christian, perhaps, had graduated.) Varnum L. Collins, President Witherspoon (2 vols.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925), II, 198.

[48]Board of Queens Trustees to the Reverend Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of the States of New York and New Jersey, May 15, 1784. Microfilm, Box 102 P, labeled "1782 Papers," of the General Synod.

[49]Olmstead, Clifton E., Religion in America, Past and Present, Spectrum Books (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1961), p. 54.

churches were nearly empty, the Sabbath desecrated, and there was a great increase in cursing and vile language. All this was blamed on the spread of free thinking and even absolute denial of the existence of God. Yet there was some evidence to the contrary. Alexander Hamilton's friend, Oliver Wolcott, wrote from New York City to his mother in Connecticut in 1789:

> There appears to be great regularity here; honesty is as much in fashion as in Connecticut; and I am persuaded that there is a much greater attention to good morals here than has been supposed. So far as an attention to the Sabbath is a criterion of religion, a comparison between this city and many places in Connecticut would be in favor of New York.[50]

Among the intellectual influences unfavorable to Christianity the war-time rise of two new religious groups, Unitarianism and Universalism, also filled the Dutch Calvinists with dismay. These two radical sects have been described as "Calvinism in reverse," because they identified the glory of God with human happiness--"the Universalists holding that God was too good to damn man, the Unitarians insisting that man was too good to be damned."[51] Both these Churches, which filtered into New York in the 1780's, had a special attraction for the unchurched. The Rev. John Murray organized the first Universalist congregation in Gloucester,

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[50]Griswold, Rufus W., The Republican Court; or American Society in the Days of Washington (2nd ed.; New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1867), p. 207.

[51]Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, p. 197.

Massachusetts, in 1779; by 1785 his followers were numerous enough to permit formation of denominational apparatus. Two years later he invaded New York City and preached several times in the City Hall to "a numerous and very respectable audience."[52]

At about the same time, James Freeman started the first Unitarian congregation in King's Chapel, Boston. Despite the small number of adherents, Unitarian ideas began to permeate religious bodies everywhere, and Dutch congregations were repeatedly warned against permitting unorthodox preachers to their pulpits.[53] Far older than either of these new Churches, and more pervasive in its effects was Deism, the religious product of the Enlightenment. Its profession became increasingly fashionable among the upper classes all through the eighteenth century. However, the "Deistical Society of New York" was not founded until 1794.[54]

With the various forms of this "new divinity" claiming so many converts from the orthodox congregations, Ezra

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[52]The Independent Journal or the General Advertiser, New York, November 10, 1787.

[53]For example, see Minutes of the Kingston Classis, Vol. I, 1773-1799, Microfilm, Box 310 P, in Dutch.

[54]Robert H. Nichols, "Protestant Churches and Institutions," in Mind and Spirit, Vol. IX of A History of the State of New York, 10 vols., ed. Alexander C. Flick (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933), p. 128.

Stiles, President of Yale College, wrote a letter of concern to Eilardus Westerlo, the scholarly pastor at Albany:

> I truly rejoyce in the Prosperity of the Dutch Church in America . . . I am looking at the Belgic [Dutch] Reformed for the Conservation of the pure Theology . . . I hope that neither Indifferentism, nor Deism nor Socinianism will devour the Belgic Churches in Europe and America as they have too much done with respect to the Reformed Churches in Britain.[55]

If the Dutch Church was to maintain this position of eminence and responsibility, immediate action was necessary. The leaders responded by attempting to rally the sister Reformed Churches so as to present a common front to infidelity.

In 1783 Dr. Livingston expressed a desire that someone would draft a plan to unite all the Reformed Churches into one national church.[56] It is doubtful whether he had any specific proposal in mind. Considering the political and economic as well as the religious uncertainties of that transitional period, the expression of some such idea would be natural. Possibly, too, he was prompted by a union in the previous year of parts of the Associate Reformed and

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[55]Stiles to Westerlo, September 13, 1788. The entire letter is quoted in T. E. V. Smith, pp. 128-129. A part of the letter is also quoted in E. S. Morgan, The Gentle Puritan: A Life of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795 (New Haven: Yale University Press, for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1962), p. 448, note 15. Dr. Livingston shared this pride in Dutch Reformed orthodoxy. See Gunn, p. 263.

[56]E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 135. The statement regarding "one national Reformed Church" is also found in Gunn, pp. 261-262.

Reformed Presbyterian Churches--two small branches of the main Presbyterian trunk.[57]

The impetus for transforming Livingston's vague wish into action was furnished by friction which developed in October, 1782, between the Particular Body and the Presbytery, both seated in New Brunswick. The Particular Body complained to the General Body about the deceitful encroachment of a Presbyterian minister, Daniel Thatcher, upon two Dutch parishes along the Delaware which had been without ministers since 1772. When the General Body asked for an explanation, the Presbytery replied with an artful letter which combined both firmness and flattery. They defended and praised Mr. Thatcher for "exciting to a serious concern for their external interests, great numbers who had hitherto been both ignorant and profligate. This is so rare an event in these degenerate days that we rejoiced to hear of it. . . ."[58]

While admitting that some of the applicants for Thatcher's services were Reformed communicants, the

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[57]Sweet, The Story of Religion, 209; E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 71; T. E. V. Smith, pp. 153-155. The resulting Church was known both as the Associate Reformed Church and the United Reformed Scotch Church. It was later absorbed into the Presbyterian Church.

[58]Letter from the Presbytery of New Brunswick to the Dutch Reformed General Synod, May 18, 1784, in "1782 Papers," Microfilm. Also see The Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. IV, No. 12 (March, 1830), p. 372.

Presbyterians said they had not expected a sister Church to take umbrage at such happy results.

> . . . we are sorry for it, and cannot induce ourselves to attribute to any want of charity, but to some misconception of our intentions in our brethren. We had no intention of dismantling your church, or of adding to our own party.

As evidence of their good intentions they pointed to the release of one of their pastors so he could serve a Reformed congregation, even though his ignorance of the Dutch language crippled his usefulness. Furthermore, they invited Reformed pastors to preach freely in their Presbyterian pulpits, "so good an opinion have we of the orthodoxy of their principles, the purity of their discipline; and if God would prosper and bless their labours, we shall rejoyce that the cause of our common Redeemer is promoted." They even declared their willingness to permit the new congregation to become a Reformed acquisition after Thatcher's departure, which was expected shortly. In conclusion, they suggested that it was ridiculous for the two denominations to quarrel; rather, they should appoint committees to consider closer cooperation.

The Dutch Synod[59] assented to this proposal, as they summarized it, "for the removal of present evils and the prevention of any similar variances in future between

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[59]In 1784, the titles "Synod" and "Classis" replaced those of "General Body" and "Particular Body." This indicates a step toward independence which will be briefly discussed later.

churches aiming alike to promote the interests of the Reformed religion."[60] They also invited the Associate Reformed Church to participate in the discussions. There followed a series of intermittent conferences and delayed reports that continued even into the next century. The Dutch Reformed delegates were guided by five resolutions drafted by the General Synod, which they supported so uncompromisingly that they virtually assured failure of the project. The provisions stated that there should be no "intermixing" of the ecclesiastical communities, and no deviation from the existing standards of each of the Churches. After stating its own doctrinal position, the Dutch Church called on the other two for similar statements which they would pledge to uphold without deviation in the future. Here, the Church stood fast; " . . . this Rev. Assembly has no other object in view in this correspondence than a closer union to benefit the general concerns of the Protestant Churches, in this country, a mutual excitement to preserve the purity of the doctrines of grace, holiness of life, and to guard against, and prevent divisions, schisms, and other irregularities."[61]

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[60] Acts and Proceedings, I, 108.

[61] The Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. IV, No. 12 (March, 1830), p. 372. See also Acts and Proceedings, I, 132, Article IV. The two translations from the Dutch differ slightly.

The delegates from the Churches met in 1785 and drew up "certain rules for the maintenance of mutual correspondence," which were accepted by the General Synod the following year without any important objections. Meanwhile, the same local irritations continued on the part of the Presbyterians although a Reformed minister had been called to the Delaware in 1785.[62] At this point, Dutch rules of procedure called for the Classes to consider the weighty project passed down to them from the Synod, and they took their time. When the five Classes finally stated their position in May, 1789, after three years of discussion, those of Albany and New York City left to the Synod the decision to proceed with the negotiations; New Brunswick demanded further pledges from the Presbyterians before continuing; and Hackensack alone stated bluntly it could see no good resulting. Albany made no report.[63]

On the basis of these reactions, along with a lengthy report from the delegates to the interdenominational conferences, the Synod repeated a statement of its doctrinal position and the pledge not to alter it. Thereafter, the project dropped from any important consideration. If the Dutch Reformed Church sought an organization in the nature of the recently completed federal union, the stumbling

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[62] Acts and Proceedings, I, 165, October, 1787.

[63] Ibid., 189-191, May, 1789.

block probably was its insistence on unalterable doctrinal standards.[64]

Although the Minutes of the Synod and the committee reports give very meager substantive information, the slow responses of the Classes indicate there was wide discussion. The earlier-mentioned letter of President Stiles was in reply to some observations of Reverend Westerlo, and the answer may well indicate the direction the Reformed Church was taking.

> I am convinced it is best for the interest of Religion that she [the Dutch Church] should not coalesce and bury herself in any other Chh., but maintain and preserve herself a distinct Body and Light in the Chh. universal . . . .
>
> May the Dutch Chhs in America subsist as a distinct Body: may the 4 United Synods of the Presbyterian Chh subsist as a distinct Body: may the Congreg'l Chhs also subsist as a distinct Body. And yet after all let us not make very much of these Distinctions. A federal Union may with peculiar Facility subsist among us of these 3 Divisions of Christians; but it must be a Union founded in and indispensably involving the separate Independency of these 3 Bodies of Fellow Xtians . . . .[65]

In 1794 an attempt was made, without success, to revive the "Brotherly Correspondence." The conferees met again in 1798 and drafted a set of new Articles for mutual consideration by the denominations, only to be followed by more inaction until 1812, when further exchanges proved fruitless.[66]

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[64]There is a hint of wide discussion in this whole matter. Stiles' letter to Westerlo was in reply to one which certainly raised these same issues.

[65]T. E. V. Smith, p. 128.

[66]Acts and Proceedings, I, 281-287. These

Despite the failure of the attempt at association with the Presbyterians, there was then, and continued to be, the closest relationship between the two Churches, which produced an easy interchange of ministers. Two outstanding Dutch pastors of the 1790's were William Linn and Ira Condict; the former left the Presbyterian Church at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, to become Livingston's colleague in New York City in 1787, while the latter "came over" in 1794 and subsequently was closely identified with the history of Queens College. Others included William Schenck, and William Smith whose mother was the sister of two prominent Presbyterian clergymen, Samuel and John Blair.[67]

The lemma in the Synod Minutes titled "Brotherly Correspondence" did not disappear with the decline of negotiations with the Presbyterians. Instead, similar parleys began with the German Reformed Church in 1794. (By several steps, beginning in 1787, this Church had established its

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negotiations proceeded fitfully all through the nineteenth century, without result. As of 1968, the Reformed Church in America (226,000 members) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (867,000 members) are very close to a merger, despite the strong opposition of a minority who greatly fear and oppose the loss of the Church's historic identity. (The masthead of the CHURCH HERALD, official publication of the R.C.A., proclaims: "the oldest Protestant denomination on the North American continent, with a continuous ministry since 1628.")

[67] E. T. Corwin, Manual, for brief biographies of Linn (pp. 572-574) and Condict (pp. 385-386). In this period, the Rev. Winslow Paige transferred from the Congregational Church in 1792, and several also came from the German Reformed Church.

independence from the control of the Classis of Amsterdam, so that both Dutch and German Reformed were completely liberated by the end of 1793.) The Dutch initiated the proposal, which differed considerably from that made to the Presbyterians because it specifically advocated union.

> As a friendly correspondence with sister churches will doubtless conduce to strengthen and establish the cause of religion, the General Synod sincerely wish to open such a correspondence and prosecute it to a union with the Reformed German churches of Pennsylvania. . . .[68]

Although these negotiations continued off and on for fifty years and seemed close to success in the 1840's, they were dashed by doctrinal differences which arose within the German Church and caused the Dutch Church to withdraw from the project.[69] Renewal of conferences in the later nineteenth century were also unproductive.

The official records of the Dutch Church reveal little of the substance contained in all these extensive conversations, or of the responses from the parties they dealt with. But there are hints that Dutch intransigence on doctrine was the chief obstacle to success. Alexander Gunn, in his biography of Livingston, wrote:

> . . . the Declaration of the Dutch Committee, shows how tenacious our fathers were of the genuine doctrines of the Gospel, and how <u>anxiously</u> they sought to bar the introduction of error into the Church; as if premonished of the way which the adversary would use at a

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[68] <u>Acts and Proceedings</u>, I, 258.

[69] E. T. Corwin, <u>Digest</u>, p. 136.

future time, but too successfully, to disseminate error.[70]

So concerned was the Dutch Church with purity of doctrine that it was sometimes guilty of the most uncharitable action with regard to "non-sister" religious bodies. Perhaps this conduct arose from its own fears as to survival, when it realized the spreading appeal of the Arminian-inclined denominations. The Methodists of Rhinebeck, New York, were few, impoverished, and without building or minister. In 1793 they asked the Dutch there for the use of their building so that Methodist ministers might occasionally visit them. Their request was denied, and they were forced to meet in shady groves in the summer, and in private homes when the weather was inclement.[71] On the other hand, where there was no direct threat, the Dutch Church and its ministers cooperated freely with the less orthodox. In 1791, the New York Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Purity was founded by seven denominations, including both the "Dutch Presbyterians" and the Methodists. Its purpose was to distribute holy scriptures and other religious books among the poor, and to assist missionaries in spreading the gospel knowledge.[72] Earlier, the

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[70]Gunn, p. 282, note.

[71]Frank W. Blanchard, History of the Reformed Dutch Church of Rhinebeck Flats (Albany: Published by the Elders and Deacons, 1931), p. 48.

[72]William Linn, Discourses on the Signs of the Times (New York: n.p., 1794), Appendix, p. 197. Linn was a

Rev. William Linn, who had left the Elizabethtown, New Jersey, Presbyterian church in 1784, to become a colleague of Livingston, was one of the founders and active with ministers from other denominations in supporting the New York Society for the Relief of Distressed Debtors, established in 1787.[73]

Association could only provide interdenominational co-operation in facing the powerful currents of secularism which surrounded and invaded the islands of religion. Far more urgent to the future of the Reformed Church was the need to assure a sufficient supply of the trained clergymen upon which it insisted, and which now were necessary if the Church was not to become merely one of the many small sects which owed their existence to the new conditions of religious freedom and equality. Not only was it in danger of losing the members of congregations with vacant pulpits; its position was also threatened in long-settled areas which had pastors, for the attractions of the frontier were sucking whole groups westward. If the Church could not follow these segments into the west, it would rapidly lose them to more popular and burgeoning denominations--or worse, to no

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Regent of the University of the State of New York, 1787-1808; President of Queens College, 1791-1794; Chaplain of the House of Representatives of the First Congress, and enjoyed a host of other distinctions.

[73]T. E. V. Smith, pp. 15-16; [N.Y.] The Independent Journal or the General Advertiser, February 14, 1787, No. 335.

religion at all. And an adequate supply of carefully prepared ministers was absolutely necessary for the Church's westward expansion.

Two steps were necessary in the process of securing a trained clergy. First, Queens College had to be maintained in order to provide a broad preparatory training. Second, there must also be the specialized theological training required to turn a broadly educated person into a clergyman, equipped for the stated needs of the Church. Both of these had been the goals of the men who fought for Americanization of the Dutch Church before the Revolution. In this critical period, old animosities and local rivalries, piled on top of post-war economic conditions, made a dismal failure of Queens. At the same time, debates over the centralization or decentralization of theological training, and its location, prevented that phase from being more than a very limited success.

The history of Queens from 1783 to 1795 is a sad memorial to apathy and financial neglect.[74] The Trustees were beset with fiscal problems from which they were never able to escape. Like most post-war creditors, they could not collect the interest on the bonds which they had purchased with past subscription money, and found themselves

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[74]This brief account of Queens between 1783 and 1795 is chiefly based upon William H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, pp. 151-175, and George P. Schmidt, Princeton and Rutgers, pp. 17-22, both works previously cited.

unable to pay the salary of the lone instructor in 1782.[75] In their desperation they even considered soliciting funds from the Netherlands Church, from whose dependence the founders of the college had sought to free the American Church.[76] The most likely source of aid for the ailing institution was the American Synod of the Reformed Church, but that impecunious body was unable to support its own theological professor. Although the Synod agreed to do what it could, its support consisted mostly of promises, and in the end proved negligible.

At New Brunswick, Dr. Jacob R. Hardenbergh, who had devoted twenty years of labor to the creation of Queens, refused to permit the institution to die without an effort, and he rallied the Trustees. They directed a strong plea for assistance to the extra session of the Synod in May, 1784, reminding the members of the purposes for which the College had been founded:

> The institution of which we are appointed the guardians, was erected not only for the good of society in general, but expressly and principally to advance the interests of the dutch reformed church in this part of the world . . . every person of observation knows that it has hitherto been supported by voluntary contributions of a few congregations in the neighborhood of New Brunswick,

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[75]All institutions faced the same economic conditions, of course. Despite fresh donations, the value of Princeton College investments had shrunk by sixty-six per cent between 1776 and 1790. The rental which Congress paid for the use of its building--7,250 pounds in depreciated currency--was worth no more than 187 actual pounds. In Collins, II, 86.

[76]ERNY, VI, 4331; W. H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 153.

> and has never yet met with any favorable exertions of the dutch church at large . . . .
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> In short, Queens College . . . has ever been considered as the child of the church; we cast it therefore into the bosom of its parent; if she will nourish and support it, success may attend her efforts, . . . but if she disregards it, as of little importance and refuses to offer us aid for its support, its dissolution must ensue and the evils arising from its ruin to the dutch reformed church in America though evident to every observer cannot be laid to our charge.[77]

The Trustees requested the Synod to raise funds for the College by circulating voluntary subscription lists in each of the churches. And since there had been no President of the institution since its inception, the Board also asked that a Professor of Theology--representing the Synod--should be united with the Presidency. They proposed the name of Rev. Dirck Romeyn of the Hackensack church (to whom they had already tendered the Presidency) for the combined office.

The Synod faced a complicated and delicate situation, with specters of the old Coetus-Conferentie dispute haunting its sessions. With a preponderance of New Yorkers, it was susceptible to pressures arising from state loyalties and local rivalries. The New York legislature was in the process (1784) of considering a state university. Columbia College was busily pruning the last of the Anglican influences so as to give it a non-sectarian appeal. And

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[77]Trustees of Queens College to the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of the States of New York and New Jersey, in "1782 Papers," Microfilm Roll 102 P.

Schenectady pressed the Synod for recognition of its plans to open a college. To add to the situation, Bergen County citizens sought the transfer of Queens to the Hackensack area and the proximity of their flourishing Academy. Under these conditions, the Synod played for time and delayed action.

Although the Synod urged the Board of Trustees to use "all diligence and care" to maintain and promote the College, it provided neither advice nor funds. In addition, it refused to combine the Presidency with the Professorate, or to transfer theological training from the New York City area. The frustrated Trustees, upon receiving from Romeyn a rejection of their offer, eventually turned to Dr. Hardenbergh, who accepted the post on February 9, 1786, and became the first President of Queens since its chartering in 1770.[78] Nevertheless, he was required to combine the position with the pastorate of the New Brunswick church in order to support himself. The first commencement over which he presided on October 2, 1787, like that in 1774, presented but one graduate.

With or without a president, the institution did not prosper. Infected by the low morale, a quorum of Trustees failed to attend Board Meetings, halting the

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[78]McCormick, Experiment in Independence, p. 58; William H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 157.

transaction of business.[79] Hardenbergh, despondent and in poor health, turned to the Synod in October, 1790, for a last appeal, and warned that the College would soon have to be abandoned. The Churchmen merely repeated their past promises, pleading that they could do no more at the moment than urge voluntary contributions.[80] At the end of the month, Hardenbergh died at the age of fifty-four, his salary three hundred thirty pounds in arrears.[81] The hard-pressed school was again without a leader, and although the Trustees offered the post to Dr. Livingston and once again to Dr. Romeyn, neither man could be criticized for refusing so dubious a distinction. Belatedly, the Synod did what it could to secure contributions; solicitors were to be named in each church, and the Rev. John Bassett was appointed to direct the campaign and receive the funds.[82]

At this point, the Trustees attempted to salvage something of their institution by uniting it with Princeton and debasing it to the level of a preparatory school for the Presbyterian college.[83] This proposal, although never carried out, angered the Synod, which temporarily sequestered

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[79]William H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 165.

[80]Acts and Proceedings, I, 207.

[81]Schmidt, p. 26.

[82]Acts and Proceedings, I, 249-250.

[83]William H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 173; Schmidt, p. 17.

the small funds collected for the College.[84] Final attempts were made in 1794 to untangle the school's financial difficulties, but the fight to save Queens was already lost. In their meeting of August 13, 1794, the Trustees announced: "The collegiate exercise in this collidge be suspended after the next commencement."[85] Five students graduated in 1794 and two in 1795, after which the suspension became effective, and remained so until 1807.[86] Since its opening in 1772, Queens had graduated some sixty students, ten of which had entered the Reformed ministry.[87]

With regard to theological training, the Church continued, despite some post-war innovations, to operate much as in the past--which is to say, inadequately. The creation of theological instruction was an obligation which had been imposed by the Articles of Union in 1771, but the Revolution had impeded this work, which now became the first order of church business. The annual trickle of licentiates never came near to supplying the needs of empty

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[84] Acts and Proceedings, I, 252.

[85] William H. S. Demarest, Rutgers, p. 184.

[86] Gunn, p. 272. In the interim, the Church began to draw candidates from Union College, Schenectady, an interdenominational school which received its charter from the State of New York in 1795, just as Queens was closing. Nearly half the Trustees were Dutch Reformed. The first Union graduate was ordained in 1798.

[87] E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 151.

pulpits, to say nothing of meeting the demands of new churches in the west.

Plans for establishing a Chair of Divinity were raised with enthusiasm, if not with unanimity, in the extra session of Synod in May, 1784. Members of the Synod generally favored independent theological instruction, unconnected with any institution, although they accepted some responsibility for Queens, as their offspring.[88] Dr. Livingston, on the other hand, favored New Brunswick as the site hoping that the location would draw the support of the German Reformed leaders in Pennsylvania.[89] He believed that the close connection with Queens would result in economies to the Church, but more important, would enable close supervision of the orthodoxy in both institutions. This, in turn, would encourage wider contributions for their support. Despite his hopes, he was realistic about the future, stating that the available funds were insufficient to support Chairs of Theology and Biblical Languages, and that it would take two years before any results could be expected.[90]

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[88] Acts and Proceedings, I, 115-116; ERNY, VI, 4320; Centennial Memorial, p. 82, and Appendix, p. 352, note 24.

[89] The German Reformed Church joined with the Lutherans to establish Franklin College, at Lancaster, Pa., in 1787, to provide their own training. Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, p. 83.

[90] Gunn, pp. 263-264, and also ERNY, VI, 4312-4314, with minor changes.

Events proved this to be the understatement of the generation.

When the Synod met again in October, it quickly created the office of Professor of Theology and unanimously named Dr. Livingston to fill it. Expediency, if nothing else, dictated that the site of the training should be New York City rather than New Brunswick on the assumption--totally mistaken, as it proved--that the Consistory of the largest and most wealthy congregation would contribute generously to support the new appointee--their own pastor. For the Synod itself was without endowments or operating funds, and simply presumed that the Collegiate church, while continuing to pay Livingston's salary, would release him from some of his parochial duties. They obviously did not bear in mind that he was the only Reformed pastor within the bounds of the City.

The courses of study considered necessary to produce a properly trained clergy had long since been laid down in the Articles of Union, which prescribed the teaching of "didactic, eleutic, exegetic, etc. theology, according to the received doctrines of our Low Dutch Reformed Church."[91] The Synod now required that students were either to train with, or (if they had begun their study elsewhere) to complete their training with Dr. Livingston. When they had

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[91] ERNY, VI, 4214.

satisfied the requirements, he would grant a certificate which would permit them to be examined for licensing; for this document they were to pay him not less than five pounds ($12.50). The potential number of students was greatly limited by the stipulation that Livingston was not to honor certificates of preparatory training from sources outside the Dutch Church. Despite the uncertainties of such an arrangement, Dr. Livingston considered the will of the assembly to be no less than a divine call and accepted the appointment. His inauguration was held on May 19, 1785 before the extra session of Synod, whose members crowded into the Garden Street church with other auditors to hear the inaugural sermon. Entitled "The Truth of the Christian Religion," his presentation was described as "a learned and elegant dissertation."[92] To complete the staff, and to justify the Church's claim as founder of the first Seminary in America, Dr. Hermanus Meyer, serving New Jersey churches at Pompton and Totowa, was named "Instructor of the students in the Inspired Languages."[93]

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[92]In the scholarly tradition, the oration was delivered in Latin. The complete Latin version is reprinted in Centennial Discourses, Appendix, pp. [553] -601. An English summary is in Gunn, p. 275.

[93]From the action of the Synod, October 2-5, 1784, the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick claims the honor of primacy in America. Until 1810 it was located in the New York City area. Andover and Princeton Theological Seminaries were founded in 1808 and 1812 respectively. Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, p. 176 and note 261.

Although the new professor began lectures almost immediately, using a room in his own home, students were discouragingly few because most aspirants for the ministry continued (whether through poverty or preference) to train locally with their own ministers. By the autumn of 1786, the Synod had already begun to tinker with the system it had just created. For students who could not afford the cost of "City" living, a rural branch was established in New Jersey with Dr. Meyer, who was given the additional title of "Lector of the most Holy Theology" to compensate for lack of emoluments. The poverty of the Church, the isolation of its extremities combined with local loyalties to force a policy of decentralization in theological and linguistic training.

In 1786, due to overwork and poor health, Dr. Livingston began his annual practice of moving to Long Island for the sultry summer months, drawing his students with him.[94]

A measure of relief from pastoral duties came for him in 1787 when the Collegiate church hired the Presbyterian, William Linn, as co-pastor. Meanwhile, the Synod making sporadic appeals to the churches for contributions, was unable to improve its financial support for the Professorate. The first specific plan to aid theological

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[94]Gunn, pp. 290-291. See also letter, JHL to unknown addressee (probably Eilardus Westerlo), July 31, 1788, Livingston Family Papers, New York Historical Society.

instruction was not drafted until May, 1791. By its provisions, six semi-annual subscription papers were to be circulated in each church during the next three years. All money collected was to be forwarded to an agent in New York City for the creation of a capital fund; the interest accruing would be added to the principal and allowed to accumulate until the annual interest from the capital was able to support an instructor.[95] Whatever its merits, the plan did nothing to solve immediate problems. Furthermore, the protests of the Queens Trustees at being excluded from the plan and the ensuing debates, deflected attention away from the Professorate for the next two and one half years.

After the death of his colleague, Dr. Meyer, in 1791, Livingston carried on alone under increasing difficulties. The system obviously was not working well; only one minister was added to the rolls in that year.[96] In 1792 the Synod, yielding further to decentralizing pressures, appointed not one but two replacements for Meyer. Dirck Romeyn at Albany and Solomon Froeligh at Hackensack were named "Lectors" with the same remuneration as Livingston. In 1793 the Synod, after long neglecting the subject,

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[95] Acts and Proceedings, I, 215; E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 165.

[96] This training system produced three in 1792, five in 1793, three in 1794 and one in 1795. E. T. Corwin, Manual, Appendix, pp. 1048-1049.

returned to consider the Professorate,[97] and produced an extensive plan the next year which renewed their efforts to create an endowment fund for the position.[98] Convinced that its maintenance in New York City discouraged support, and repelled students in view of the high cost of living, they requested Livingston to move to Long Island. Once again his Consistory was asked to relieve Livingston of some of his duties. The Consistory responded by reducing his pastoral duties by half-and his salary in the same proportion, leaving him to make up the difference by fees.

Dutifully, Livingston completed his arrangements and took up permanent residence at Flatbush in the spring of 1796. He was briefly encouraged by an increase in the number of students, but this mood gave way to exasperation and despair as the Synod failed to implement the plan of 1791. Goaded by this apathy, he sent a blunt letter to the Particular Synod in October. He reviewed the origins of his office and reminded the members of the pledge given to the Netherlands Church in 1771 by which it was agreed, in exchange for a measure of American autonomy, to establish theological training in order to supply an orthodox ministry. The Minutes of the Synod were littered with plans and resolutions but the goal was no nearer of achievement. He attacked them for their vacillating and equivocal

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[97] ERNY, VI, 4368-4369.

[98] Gunn, pp. 342-347; E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 166.

policies of a dozen years but also blamed the indifference within the churches. Concluding with a sort of ultimatum, he asked for a forthright declaration of their intentions.

> The Professorate remains thus entirely forsaken, and no measures are pursued, or even proposed, to countenance and assist the Institution . . . it is time that our views should be candidly explained, and the business brought to some decided point . . . . If it be conceived that a regular course of lectures in Theology is not necessary; if the Dutch Church will consent to be beholden to other denominations for the education of their candidates; or if, in consequence of any other plan, the present Institution is to be abandoned, let it be explicitly and without delay declared, that the congregations may be acquainted with the decision, and other arrangements to supply their wants be immediately made.[99]

It was impossible, he said, for one person to struggle on alone any longer. His own conclusions were that the Church had no intention of making the Professorate effective; that if inaction continued, the institution would soon become extinct. He wished to know whether "if nothing is done in their present session for accomplishing the plan adopted in the last General Synod, it will not be proper for me immediately to discontinue my labors and hold no more lectures for the students."[100]

Alarmed by this angry statement, the Synod expressed the hope that he would carry on, and immediately ordered the printing and circulating to the churches of a subscription

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[99]The complete letter is found in ERNY, VI, 4373-4374 and Centennial Memorial, Appendix, pp. 359-361.

[100]Ibid.

letter. But when the collections were returned, the receipts fell far short of the needs.[101]

The triennial General Synod which met in 1798 abandoned all pretense of accepting the problem and its responsibilities. To the question, "Is it expedient under present circumstances, to take any further measures for the support of the Professorate?" it gave an outright negative.[102] Instead, they extended the policy of decentralization, at no cost to the Synod, and made the two "Lectors" full Professors of Theology, equal with Livingston. All three were authorized to collect ten pounds annually (about $25.00) from each student who might come their way. At this point Livingston abandoned Long Island, and resumed his regular pastoral duties in New York, although he continued to accept students.[103]

Matters were not improved in 1799 when the Particular Body (the continuation of the old General Body) usurped the powers allotted to the General Synod by the new Constitution, and appointed three "Teachers of the Hebrew Language," also to be located in the regional centers, Albany, New York

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[101] Acts and Proceedings, I, 467.

[102] ERNY, VI, 4376 and Acts and Proceedings, I, 269.

[103] In 1800 Froeligh at Hackensack had five students, Romeyn at Schenectady had three, and Livingston had one. Acts and Proceedings, I, 291. In the years 1797-1799, Romeyn had ten students. Between 1783 and 1800 fifty-five entered the ministry of the Dutch Church--an average of three per year.

and Hackensack. With no alternative in sight, the General Synod in 1800 recommended the continuation of matters as they were until the growth of the capital fund was sufficient to support one or more professors. To speed the growth of the fund, an annual tax of two shillings per member was proposed, to be levied for six years. Accompanied by a strongly worded pastoral letter, the Synod urged the plan upon all the congregations.[104] And to secure action, solicitors were authorized to keep five per cent of the collections.

The series of ill-considered decentralizing measures adopted between 1797 and 1799 did not have any favorable results. A survey of the Church in 1800 indicated one hundred thirty nine congregations--forty of them vacant--with but fifty-nine ministers to serve them, and only five candidates waiting in the wings.[105] In May, 1803, the Collegiate church, tired of the Synod's inaction and probably under the astute suggestion of Dr. Livingston, threatened to use the terms of a pre-war royal charter to secure the appointment of Livingston as Professor of Divinity at Columbia College.[106]

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[104] Acts and Proceedings, I, 300.

[105] E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 698. Also ERNY, VI, 4391.

[106] This was the provision secured by Ritzema in 1755. ERNY, V, 3544-3555.

Forced to act, they first issued a wary but negative statement that it had

> no power to examine political charters or rights conveyed to individuals, and cannot enter into the proposed plan, as they wish not to blend their theological professorate with any other establishment not derived from the immediate authority of the Low-Dutch Reformed churches.[107]

The Synod now reversed itself without any visible embarrassment, and shelved the policy of decentralization. Dr. Livingston was named "Permanent Professor," the other two theological instructors were written off as mere "temporary expedients," and for the benefit of students New York City was declared to possess cultural assets which outweighed the economic advantages of rural retreats.[108]

Despite the reunification of the Professorate the difficulties of financial support remained unsolved. Another appeal to the churches for contributions to the capital fund proved ineffective. The Church, along with the Professorate, seemed on the way to extinction in 1807 when only one candidate was added to the ministerial rolls.[109] But just at this juncture the moribund Trustees of Queens awakened and once more proposed the union of the College

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[107] Acts and Proceedings, I, 339.

[108] Centennial Memorial, p. 88.

[109] Centennial Memorial, Appendix, "General Catalogue," pp. 484-485. In the period 1804-1810 only sixteen students had trained and joined the ministry, although about half that number had entered from other denominations.

and the Professorate--the obvious solution which had been rejected for a quarter century.

In negotiations lasting from 1807 to 1810, it was decided to combine the Presidency and the Professorate at New Brunswick. To placate lingering particularism, the funds contributed by New York churches were to be used solely to support the Professorate. The vision of the Americanizing pastors in the settlement of 1772 was finally realized.

The solution of the problems connected with the Professorate and Queens came too late to permit any constructive work on the frontier, which had already reached the Mississippi; this had been left to other denominations which were ready. But the Dutch Church was now prepared to strengthen itself within the limited boundaries more suitable for its resources. In October, 1810, Dr. Livingston fittingly assumed the combined office of Professor and President at New Brunswick.

Despite his manifold responsibilities as pastor, professor and committee member, Livingston played a major role in establishing the legal status of the Dutch Church as modified by post-war legislation under the New York Constitution of 1777. This work fell to him for several reasons: he was the undoubted dean of the Dutch clergy; his family connections placed him in a knowledgeable position; and he

was a zealous guardian of the interests of the Church--as he saw them. On October 22, 1783, he wrote to Westerlo:

> The revolution in our political interests has made a change in the general face of our American world, and as it has removed some difficulties which were taken into consideration in our former plan, so it has introduced others which deserve a very weighty and impartial discussion.[110]

For the Church, the major questions concerned the kind of laws which the Legislature would enact, and how the Church would be affected by them.

Immediately after his return to the Garden Street church in November, 1783, Dr. Livingston began his work, starting first to clarify the status of the Collegiate church. Although the ecclesiastical charters granted by the English to that church in 1696 had been guaranteed by the Constitution of 1777, the Legislature was petitioned for a ruling. The Legislature responded on March 17, 1784, by passing an act

> to remove doubts which may have arisen respecting the charter rights of the minister, elders and deacons, of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of the city of New York, in consequence of the late invasion of the State . . . that the said charter <u>and all and singular the rights</u>, estates, powers, liberties, franchise, and immunities, thereby granted and confirmed, and which the said corporation and the members thereof did actually hold, exercise and enjoy, on the 11th of April, 1775, by virtue of the said charter . . . shall continue in full force and virtue . . . notwithstanding any nonuser or misuser thereof, or any part thereof,

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[110]Gunn, pp. 257-258.

between the 18th of April 1775 and the day of passing this act.[111]

The Collegiate church thus retained all its original powers except that of assessing its members to pay for church salaries and repairs.[112]

While this bill was in the Legislature, Dr. Livingston was also busy covering his church's legal position with the municipal government. Because of the lapse of time since the charter had been "used" in New York City, Livingston, through his friend Mayor James Duane, applied to the Council on February 11, 1784 for a bill confirming the charter of the Dutch Church in New York City. He wanted the surviving members of the Consistory of 1776 to be considered the official Consistory as if no lapse of time had occurred. This also would permit the holding of an immediate election to fill the vacancies. A genial exchange of notes between the two men insured a rapid confirmation. The bill received its first reading on February 12, and Duane returned the bill immediately to Livingston for any necessary corrections so that it could have its final reading the next day.[113]

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[111] Murray Hoffman, Ecclesiastical Law in the State of New York (New York: Pott and Amery, 1868), p. 110.

[112] United States Works Progress Administration. Inventory of the Church Archives of New York City, Reformed Church in America, p. 8.

[113] Livingston to Duane, February 11, 1784; Duane to Livingston, February 12; Livingston to Duane, February 12. Livingston Family Papers, New York Historical Society.

Within the next two months, the Legislature passed, with little or no debate, a series of four bills providing for a general religious settlement. Only the first of these, the Incorporation Act of April 6, was of major importance to the Dutch Reformed Church.[114] Under its terms, all religious bodies were for the first time equal before the law. They were enabled to elect a Board of from three to nine Trustees who had the right to incorporate for the purposes of handling the property ("temporalities") of the congregation, and all its finances. Each church was permitted to have an annual income or revenue of not more than twelve hundred pounds. The act also contained safeguards against state interference with ecclesiastical forms or beliefs.

The Boards of Trustees which managed the "temporalities" were to be completely separate from those which managed the spiritual affairs of the churches, and so organized that one third of the members were to be replaced each year. The Act stipulated that at the first election every male person who had statedly worshiped with the congregation, and had been considered as belonging to it,

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[114]The full title was "An Act to enable all the religious denominations in this State to appoint Trustees, who shall be a body corporate, for the purpose of taking care of the temporalities of their respective congregations, and for other purposes therein mentioned." For pertinent extracts see ERNY, VI, 4316; Pratt, pp. 100-102; E. T. Corwin, Digest, pp. 328-331; and Mark De Wolfe Howe, compiler, Cases on Church and State in the United States (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 94.

was entitled to vote. In subsequent elections, however, the voter had to be a stated attendant of the church for one year before the election, and to have contributed to the support of the church.[115]

These provisions were completely destructive of the traditional system by which those responsible for the spiritual affairs of the church (the Consistory) also managed the property and finances.[116] The Consistory of the Collegiate church, for example, consisted of twelve elders and twelve deacons, who along with the pastor, administered church property. These elected their own successors--generally themselves--and the church members had no part in the government.[117] While the Act of 1784 disclaimed all intent to change the religious constitution of any Church, the obvious consequence of the Act was to separate spiritual and temporal controls. If permitted to stand, it would take away the powerful right to manage church property, which had rested for more than one hundred fifty years in the hands of a small closed body, and place it in the hands of laymen over whom they had no control.

When the General Synod met in October, 1784, it remarked that there were "weighty objections" to the Act, and warned the individual congregations not to be hasty in

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[115]Hoffman, pp. 41-42.

[116]David D. Demarest, The Reformed Church in America, pp. 187-188.

[117]T. E. V. Smith, pp. 125-126.

availing themselves of this law, but to give it more consideration before the next Synod.[118] In the interval, the Church leaders became even more convinced that there were "highly objectionable features in the Act." Consequently, in the fall of 1785 they appointed a committee of five from New York and three from New Jersey to petition the "Supreme Magistrates" of both states to modify the Act or frame a new one which would permit the Reformed churches to incorporate on the terms of the old charters granted by the English.[119]

Dr. Livingston, a member of the committee, vigorously led the campaign to regain the customary practices of the Church. Although he had championed the cause of American independence, he was not in any way prepared to accept the republican ideas which flowed from that movement. In March, 1786, he had written to Dirck Romeyn:

> In this plan there are many of our great folks so established, that I despaired of any opening for redress in our case. I applied, however, constantly to some leading members in both houses [New York Legislature], and at last obtained their consent to a bill. . . . But, even as to this bill, it is suggested to me, that it will be insisted upon, and probably a clause for that purpose added to the bill, that our Elders and Deacons shall be chosen at large by the people, and not by the Consistories, as at present, being, as they say, more republican. Should this last be urged, I would rather drop the whole application, as that remedy would be worse than the present disease, and would infallibly bring confusion into our Churches. The truth

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[118] Acts and Proceedings, I, 129.

[119] Ibid., 141-142; ERNY, VI, 4331.

is, I do not feel anxious to bring the business forward at this session.[120]

Under Livingston's leadership, the committee prepared an alternative plan and submitted it to the Synod of October, 1786, with a draft petition to the Legislatures of both states. The Synod approved these documents and they were presented to the law-makers a short time later.[121] When the New York Legislature was slow to act, the extra session of the Synod in May 1787 called for a petition campaign from all the churches to hasten a decision.[122] Finally, the operation was partially successful, for the New York Legislature passed an act on March 7, 1788, which permitted the Consistories of the Reformed Church to act as Boards of Trustees. Among other things, it provided:

> that the Minister or Ministers, and Elders and Deacons, and if, during any time, there be no Minister, then the Elders and Deacons, during such time, of every Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, or congregation, now or hereafter to be established in this State, and elected according to the rules and usages of such Churches within this State, shall be the Trustees for every such Church or congregation.[123]

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[120]Gunn, p. 286; see also David D. Demarest, The Reformed Church in America, p. 188.

[121]Acts and Proceedings, I, 150-151. A lengthy account, given in Dutch and signed by Westerlo, under heading "Letters from the Synod Meeting in New York," and dated 5 October 1787, is located on Microfilm Roll 30 P. An English translation is found in ERNY, VI, 4346, under the heading "Laws of Incorporation."

[122]Acts and Proceedings, I, 156-157.

[123]Gunn, p. 287. Humphrey, p. 291, follows Gunn.

In New Jersey, the situation was much the same as in New York. Churches holding charters from the English sought confirmation from the Legislature so as to guarantee the legality of their acts and their property rights. In 1789, the Legislature, yielding to these requests and the pressure of the Synodical committee, enacted a new law, patterned on that of New York in the previous year. It stated:

> Whereas, the Legislature is willing to grant relief in the premises, and to communicate equal privileges to every denomination of Christians,
> Be it therefore enacted, That the minister or ministers, elders and deacons for the time being, or, if there be no minister or ministers, the elders and deacons for the time being, of every Reformed Dutch congregation, shall be trustees of the same, and a body politic and corporate in law, by such name as the said trustees shall assume in manner hereinafter directed.[124]

As a result, those churches holding English charters repudiated them in order to incorporate under the new state law. In 1790, the churches at Millstone and Six Mile Run were among the first to do so.[125] The Bedminster church incorporated in September, 1791,[126] while Bergen did not surrender her old charter until 1799.[127]

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[124]E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 330.

[125]E. T. Corwin, Historic Discourse, Millstone, 1866, pp. 65-66.

[126]David Layton, [and Harold D. Hayward], The Historical Background and Growth of the Bedminster Church, Bedminster, New Jersey (n.p.: printed privately, 1948), p. 29.

[127]B. C. Taylor, p. 122.

The Reformed Church and its official bodies were far too busy with their own problems to concern themselves with the federal Constitutional Convention which met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. In turn, the Convention paid small heed to the subject of religion. Article VI contained the only specific reference[128] to religion in the body of the Constitution: "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office of public trust under the United States."

Enveloped as the Church was in its own endeavors of restoration, education, fund-raising and clarification of legal positions, a few of its members nevertheless participated in the movement "to form a more perfect union."[129] In the preliminary period, James Schureman of New Brunswick was one of the three New Jersey delegates at the Annapolis meeting. At Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 there was only one representative[130] of the Reformed Church--a member of the New York delegation.[131]

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[128]Olmstead, p. 53.

[129]George Bancroft, in his History of the United States, made the interesting statement, "If the English gave our fathers the idea of popular representation, Holland originated for them the principle of federal union." Quoted in Centennial Discourses, p. 118. Certainly, there are many passages in The Federalist to show that Madison had thoroughly studied the features of the Dutch government.

[130]McCormick, Experiment in Independence, p. 199. Schureman became a staunch Federalist, and was elected to the House of Representatives of the first Congress in February of 1789.

[131]Sweet, Religion in the Development of American

In the ensuing struggle for ratification of the Constitution, the divisions which had appeared in New York with the outbreak of the Revolution reasserted themselves. The four counties in the New York City area favored ratification of the Constitution; every one of the ten counties to the north opposed it. Much of this opposition was directed at the holders of the great land patents which were located in six of these counties. With the exception of an occasional Van Cortlandt or Lansing, these landlords looked to the federal Constitution for the security of their property rights.[132]

The available secondary evidence is indecisive as to the part played by the Dutch, and especially by members of the Dutch Church, in securing or opposing the federal Constitution. The Dutch delegates from the Northern counties to the ratifying Convention were heavily

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Culture, p. 85. This compares with 19 Episcopalians, 8 Congregationalists, 7 Presbyterians. Sweet gives the name of neither the delegate nor the state. It is probably Robert Yates, but it could have been John Lansing; but Sweet could also be in error, since the Dutch Church at Albany claimed both.

[132]George Dangerfield, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York, 1746-1813 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1960), p. 219. Most important for the geographical (county) representations and votes in the ratifying convention is Linda Grant De Pauw, The Eleventh Pillar: New York State and the Federal Constitution (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, for the American Historical Association, 1966). Unfortunately, there is not a single reference to religious affiliations of any kind in the book. See also David M. Ellis, et al., pp. 124-128.

anti-Federalist.[133] Yet E. W. Spaulding declared that the Dutch, who were perhaps a scanty one-fifth of the population of the state, "were very generally Federalist."[134] The lower classes had steadily backed the republican Governor, George Clinton, since his first election in 1777, and he was their leader at this time against the aristocratic Livingston-Schuyler-Hamilton faction.[135]

On April 10, 1788, "A Manifesto of a Number of Gentlemen from Albany County"[136] was published, in support of a slate of eight antifederalist nominees for the ratifying Convention. Seven of the eight names were Dutch, and they included Yates and Lansing. The co-chairmen of the group were Jeremiah Van Rensselaer and Matthew Visscher. Of the subscribers, at least seventeen of the twenty-six were Dutch. While, admittedly, a Dutch name did not necessarily mean membership in the Dutch Church, the chances that this was so in Albany County were exceptionally good.

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[133]De Pauw, pp. 248-249, Table 4. Division on the final votes at the Poughkeepsie Convention.

[134]Spaulding, New York in the Critical Period, 1783-1789, pp. 31-32.

[135]Broadus and Louise Mitchell, in their book A Biography of the Constitution of the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 170, refer tantalizingly to "a set of ignorant Dutchmen" who backed Governor Clinton against the Constitution.

[136]Cecilia M. Kenyon, The Anti-federalists (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1965), pp. 359-367.

However, there were Federalists in the area also--including some Dutch--and they were not intimidated by the heavy opposition. The local Federalist committee brought out a Dutch translation of the Constitution[137] which was made by Lambertus De Ronde, pre-Revolutionary pastor of the Collegiate church and currently at Schaghticoke in Rensselaer County. This work was credited with converting many Dutch votes to the support of the Constitution, which the New York Convention ratified on July 26, 1788.[138] Five days later Dr. Livingston wrote to Westerlo:

> The approval of our new Constitution has been executed, and it appears that the Lord has thereby preserved us from confusion if not bloodshed. This presents new causes for Thanksgiving.[139]

On April 30, 1789, Livingston, Linn and all the other clergymen of New York City held Inauguration Day services in their churches.[140] Later, at the ceremony on

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[137]Thomas J. Wertenbaker, The Founding of American Civilization: The Middle Colonies (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938), p. 116. Cited from Thomas Hunt, Historical Sketch of the Town of Cleremont, p. 22.

[138]E. T. Corwin, Manual, 418. The full Dutch title was: De Constitutie, eenpariglyk geaccoordeerd by de algemeene Conventie, gehoude in de Stad Philadelphia in 't Jaar 1787; en gesubmiteerd van het Volk der Vereenigde Staaten van Noord Amerika; Zynde van ses derzelve Staaten geadopteerd, namentlyk, Massachusetts, Connectècut, Nieuw Jersey, Pennsylvanie, Delaware en Georgia. Vertaald door Lambertus De Ronde, V. D. M. Gedrukt by order van de Federal Committee in de Staad van Albany, door Charles R. Webster, 1788.

[139]Livingston to Westerlo 31 [July, 1788], Livingston Family Papers. The date is torn from the upper right hand corner, except for the figure "31".

[140]Griswold, pp. 138-139.

the balcony of Federal Hall, "the dignified and eloquent" Livingston stood in the background to watch the proceedings with other notables.[141] And when the Synod met in October, it despatched an address to President Washington which he acknowledged with "an affectionate and friendly reply" several months later.[142]

On May 1, 1789, the Dutch Reformed Church was greatly honored by the choice of Dr. William Linn as Chaplain to the House of Representatives in the first Congress. He was selected by a vote of twenty-seven to nineteen over Dr. John Rodgers, of the Presbyterian Church, who was much disappointed at his defeat.[143] Linn officiated for the first time on May 5. Chaplain of the Senate was Samuel Provoost, Bishop of the Episcopal Church and Rector of the still unrestored Trinity church. The legislative arrangement provided that the two men should exchange chambers weekly. Linn was also denominated House Chaplain for the second session of Congress.[144]

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[141] Ibid., Appendix VII, 448.

[142] E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 402; Paul F. Boller, Jr., George Washington and Religion (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1963), pp. 87, 177-178; Writings of George Washington, XXX, 432, note 83.

[143] T. E. V. Smith, pp. 133-134; E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 406; Griswold, pp. 175-176.

[144] Douglas Southall Freeman, George Washington, A Biography, Vol. VI: Patriot and President (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 196.

The New Jersey Dutch comprised one-sixth of the state's population and were the second largest ethnic element, yet they displayed far less concern for politics than their fellows in New York.[145] Although there were no members of the Church at Philadelphia, there were several at the New Jersey ratifying Convention. Somerset County sent both Colonel Frederick Frelinghuysen and Dr. Hardenbergh to Trenton in December, 1787, along with Dr. Witherspoon, so that the Colleges and Churches were well-represented.[146]

In this period of great activity in the making of laws and constitutions, the Churches also were active. Between 1781 and 1788 the Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, Catholics and Presbyterians had all declared their independence from European connections, where that had been necessary, and had re-organized under some new constitution or dispensation. The leaders of the Dutch were unable to ignore this environment, and by 1788 were moving rapidly in the direction of ecclesiastical independence and constitution-making.

The diverse problems with which the Dutch Church grappled in the 1780's and 1790's had one thing in common: they were American problems. They involved numerous and frequently painful adjustments--denominational, educational,

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[145]McCormick, Experiment in Independence, p. 41.

[146]Collins, II, 164-165; also McCormick, Experiment in Independence, p. 268 and note.

legal and economic--to an environment that was American. Excepting, perhaps, the concern for maintaining doctrinal purity, these difficulties did not involve the intricate questions of theology such as the learned doctors disputed in seventeenth century Amsterdam. Instead, mostly by trial--and as often by error--they were concerned to find viable solutions to problems of restoration, interdenominational relations, and institutional organization and finance. In some instances the answers were delayed by factors of particularism, apathy, or even geography. In these perplexities, the members of the Dutch Church came increasingly to realize that for the solutions they had to depend upon themselves as Americans and as part of an American institution.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMPLETION OF ECCLESIASTICAL INDEPENDENCE, 1784-1793

Under the provisions of the Articles of Union of 1771, the Dutch Church had achieved an ill-defined but palpable state of semi-independence. The chaos of the Revolutionary years had given the appearance of a static or even retrogressive institution, but this was only illusory. Like all other American institutions, the Reformed Church was forced to move forward along the path of national independence which was opened by the final victory. In company with the other religious institutions, it had begun to modify its relationship to Europe at the coming of peace, but it was among the last to complete the process of separation by creating its own constitution and organizational structure.

The decision to nationalize the Dutch Church was signalled in 1784 with the rejection of the titles "General Body" and "Particular Body," both of which implied subservience and inferiority. Instead, the names of the parallel bodies in the Netherlands were adopted to

distinguish the American assemblies. The General Body of October 15-18, 1784, decided:

> Since the names of the Respective Bodies have associated with them many difficulties and inconveniences in the use of them, especially in the Minutes, and are also to an extent unintelligible to other persuasions, and have thus tended to the discredit of our otherwise respectable Church, the Rev. Body . . . have seen fit to change the same in accordance with the provision made in the Articles of Union, and henceforth to apply to the General Body the name SYNOD, and to the Particular Bodies the name Classis. . . .[1]

The Synod of 1785 was the first to use the new designation.[2]

Correspondence with the Classis of Amsterdam, interrupted since 1776, had been restored with the receipt of a letter dated July 21, 1783. On October 8, 1784, Dr. Livingston replied in the name of the Synod, and used the occasion to inform Amsterdam of the altered American titles and the newly established Professorate. After a paragraph of pleasantries concerning the return of peace and the resumption of correspondence, he proceeded in very guarded and diplomatic language to indicate the changes:

> The Acts of our more recent Meetings which we have the honor of forwarding to the Rev. Classis of Amsterdam with this letter, are those of October, 1783, May, 1784, and October, 1784. From these you will learn the condition of our churches. The number of our ministers has been diminished by death, since the beginning of the war. We are the more grieved at this, not only because there were eminent men among them, but because the

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[1] ERNY, VI, 4321. During the next ten years, the new name was not clearly defined, and three different and sometimes confusing forms were used: Synod, Particular Synod, and General Synod. See E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 135.

[2] Acts and Proceedings, I, 138; ERNY, VI, 4328.

number of vacant congregations has thereby been increased. However, the "MEASURES AND THE APPOINTMENTS" which we have now made, appear in our judgment, to be the means best adapted, under the blessing of God, to heal the breaches and promote the future prosperity of our churches. They are such measures and appointments as we trust will meet with the unanimous approbation of the Church in the Netherlands. The recognition of this by the Very Rev. Synod of North Holland and the Rev. Classis of Amsterdam, we will receive with great satisfaction. . . .

There have been no changes in our circumstances or names, which will occasion even the least change in our love, esteem and adherence to the Church in the Netherlands, or cause our correspondence to languish.[3]

The Classis of Amsterdam, miffed by this arrogation of authority, greeted the transmission with a cold Trans-Atlantic silence. After nineteen months had passed without further correspondence, Hermanus Meyer wrote an ingenuous letter in the name of the Synod:

A long time has elapsed since we were favored with letters from the Very Rev. Classis of Amsterdam, together with the long expected Acts of the very Rev. Synod of North Holland. Inasmuch as, by the desired peace, navigation has again been opened between us and the esteemed inhabitants of our Fatherland, so that it is better than heretofore, we have cherished the hope that our correspondence, which was interrupted by the war, might be revived. But alas! for a long time now we have awaited in vain for the delightful reports from the Church of the Fatherland. This has given us considerable anxiety, thinking that possibly some of the letters may have got lost. The last letter of the very Rev. Classis received by us was dated July 21, 1783. Since that time we have received no communication.[4]

An answer was already on its way, but of a different sort than the Synod hoped for. Pointedly ignoring the new

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[3] ERNY, VI, 4324 and note.

[4] ERNY, VI, 4338.

titles, the reply, dated January 10, 1786, was addressed to the "Ecclesiastical Assembly of New York and New Jersey," thus denying the assumption of either independence or equality. Although no reference was made to the new titles, it observed, with regard to the appointments of Livingston and Meyer:

> Our heart's desire is that the All-sufficient Jehovah may increasingly furnish both men with all needed gifts and graces for those eminent and weighty positions, and make them blessed instruments for instructing young Nazarites. . . .[5]

Livingston presented this letter before the Synod which met October 3-6, 1786 and it was briefly noted in the Minutes:

> The Rev. Body rejoice in the highest degree in this new token of unbroken union and edifying fellowship, and return their thanks to the Rev. Classis of Amsterdam for their continued fraternal care in transmitting the above-mentioned Synodical Acts.[6]

Beyond this there was no comment. But it was undeniable that the Classis of Amsterdam, by ignoring the innovations in America, had placed the "Synod" in an embarrassing position.[7]

The deliberateness of the slight was confirmed the following year when Dr. Livingston received a packet from the Netherlands which contained a letter and the Acts of

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[5]Ibid., p. 4337.

[6]Acts and Proceedings, I, 145; ERNY, VI, 4340.

[7]Humphrey, p. 303.

the Synod of North Holland. These were addressed to "the Rev. Church Assembly of New York and New Jersey."[8] Extremely agitated at this second rebuff, Livingston wrote to Romeyn:

> The letter accompanying the acts of the Synod I have not opened, but have only taken notice of the address, in which I find they implicitly deny our being a Synod, by giving us the same title we had before our present organization; and this is one thing I wish to know your sentiments upon; whether it would not be proper for us by some article in our minutes, or by some clause in our letter, to express our sensibility upon their silence respecting our present judicatories; for if we correspond, it ought to be continued upon the footing of mutual respect, or it may, in its consequences, soon be productive of some disagreeable events. Perhaps we have been too remiss in not taking notice of this before, or it is possible that silence may be the most prudent and eligible. I have not yet made up my own mind upon the subject, but will cheerfully refer myself to your judgment: I wish you would think upon it.[9]

When the Synod met on October 2, 1787, this matter became an early item of business, and it was resolved to draft a reply before the meeting disbanded.[10] In the name of the Synod, Dr. Westerlo signed the letter dated October 5, which read in part:

> . . . we would be very much obliged, if your Revs. very much esteemed letters might hereafter be addressed to this our Church Assembly under the adopted and here most familiar name of, "The Synod of the Reformed Dutch Churches of New York and New Jersey."[11]

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[8] ERNY, VI, 4342.

[9] Gunn, pp. 296-297.

[10] Acts and Proceedings, I, 160-161.

[11] ERNY, VI, 4346.

Although the American Synod continued annually to forward copies of its Minutes, the Classis of Amsterdam made no response. The Constitution of the American Church was completed and accepted without any acknowledgment or assistance. From 1789 onward, the Minutes usually carried some variant of the statement "neither a letter from the Classis of Amsterdam nor the Proceedings of the Synod of North Holland have been received."[12] Between 1794 and 1800 the new Particular and General Synods also sent their Minutes, but abandoned the practice when there was no reply. In the Netherlands, lemmas or spaces in the Minutes for American entries were maintained until 1810, when the last notation read "No News from New York and New Jersey."[13]

Regardless of the reaction of the Netherlands Church, much more than a change of name was necessary to establish an independent American Church. In October, 1785, the General Synod decided that:

> since in many of our congregations Divine service must be performed in the English language, it will be necessary hereafter to make some regulations upon this subject, but defer the same for the present.[14]

The following year, the subject was again put off, but in the meantime each congregation continued to use such Psalm Books as were available. Some churches were using the

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[12]See Acts and Proceedings, I, for Minutes of years concerned.

[13]E. T. Corwin, Digest, pp. 33, 189; ERNY, I, 18-19.

[14]Acts and Proceedings, I, 142-143; ERNY, VI, 4332.

English version adopted by New York City in 1767.[15] These would not be required to change to a new edition. The Synod appointed a committee of seven men, presumably led by Livingston, whose name headed the list. This group was authorized to make, as speedily as possible, a new versified selection of Psalms from such English collections as were acceptable in the Reformed churches.

The work began immediately, and before it ended, involved a complete reconstruction of the Constitution of the Dutch Reformed Church. In March, 1788, Dr. Livingston wrote to Dirck Romeyn, also on the committee, that he had progressed as far as Psalm Fifty, and hoped that the selections of the other members would be ready early enough so that their choices could be compared and a report made to the Synod in October. However, Livingston saw that more than a new English version of the Psalms had become necessary.

> I suppose it will be proper, when we get the new Psalms printed, to have the Catechism, Articles of Faith and Liturgy, printed and bound-up with some of the books, and leave it to the purchaser to get the Psalm Book either with or without those additions. . . . But a fair opportunity will now be offered to publish with our articles and liturgy, the form of our discipline and government. The Churches in America are all assuming a new complexion. From being the appendages of national Churches in Europe, they now become national Churches themselves in this new Empire. All the denominations of any importance in America, have considered themselves in this new light, and have made regulations accordingly; and it deserves our attention to see what ought to be

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[15]The Collegiate Version leaned heavily on the Tate and Brady Psalm Book; some were taken over intact in English; others were altered to fit the Dutch music.

> done with respect to ourselves in this particular, and how far we may proceed consistent with the relation we yet claim to our mother Church in Holland. We are not represented, and we cannot have a representation in the Churches in Holland,--as such, we have already formed ourselves into an independent Synod, and we have sufficient proof that some of our brethren in Amsterdam would rather we had not done this, but their views are contracted, and cannot be our rule. It is necessary we should revise some articles in our fundamental agreement respecting our church government of 1771, and see whether some of those articles do not militate against our independent state.[16]

Even without additional evidence, this would be enough to justify Gunn's claim that Livingston was the first to propose the drafting of a new Church Constitution, and is entitled to his reputation as its "Father."[17]

With regard to the Psalm Book, the Committee reported progress, but not enough for a full report by the autumn of 1787. The Synod responded by laying down some specifications limiting their work. They were to assemble their collection from only three sources: the Collegiate Church Psalms, the Tate and Brady collection, and that of Isaac Watts. However, substitutions from other sources could be made, if necessary, to maintain conformity with the Confession of Faith. Citing the urgent necessity of the churches, the committee was empowered to rush their compilation to the printers as soon as agreement was reached on the entries, so that the Synod could recommend it to the

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[16]Gunn, pp. 298-299. Also reproduced in Humphrey, p. 292.

[17]Gunn, p. 320.

congregations in 1789. In addition to the Psalms, it also permitted the inclusion of "some well-composed spiritual hymns." Lastly, it required the Heidelberg Catechism, Confession of Faith, and Forms of the Church as they existed in English in the Collegiate church version, to be inserted in all copies.[18]

The Committee now pressed the work vigorously, and Dr. Livingston wrote Romeyn in March, 1789:

> I have received answers from all the gentlemen of the committee, and am authorized and requested by them to proceed with the printing. The expectation and wishes of our Churches are raised, and I am continually asked when our Psalms will be published. . . . As to the translations, and what respects our Church discipline and government, these, I suppose, may be brought in such readiness as to enable to make some report in the Synod of May, and take such further steps, as to lay the whole before the Synod of October.[19]

By the time Synod met in October, they were able to report that the work was in press, and would soon be out.[20] A year later, in 1790, the Synod noted that the new Psalm Book was already in use in many congregations. Dr. Livingston, especially, and his fellow editors were thanked for their work. A curious note was added when the Synod, already at work on an American Constitution, conceded that the churches were also free to use--if they wished--a new Dutch version

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[18] Acts and Proceedings, I, 182 (October, 1788); also Humphrey, pp. 292-293.

[19] Gunn, p. 299.

[20] Acts and Proceedings, I, 199.

of the Psalms which the Netherlands Church had just authorized.[21]

Despite certain defects in the work, the Psalm Book enjoyed a rapid sale, and a second edition soon appeared.[22] When the federal government enacted a copyright law in 1791, Livingston immediately took advantage of it for the Church. Once again he wrote to Romeyn:

> It was a consequence to us to obtain a copyright of our Psalm Book. As our Synod is not a body corporate, I took it out in the name of our Dutch Church of New-York; and, to ascertain the property for the Synod, I have got an instrument sealed with the seal of the Consistory, in which a declaration is made that this right is held in trust for the Synod, and shall always be subject to the direction of the same.[23]

For its part, the Synod showed its appreciation to Livingston by authorizing him to do whatever was necessary in the matter.[24]

In the course of preparing various materials for inclusion in the Psalm Book, it soon became apparent that the whole structure of Reformed Church government needed an overhauling in order to adapt it to requirements of the new American conditions. The major denominations had already

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[21] Ibid., 212.

[22] The Psalm Book contained all the Psalms and one hundred hymns. There was no music in the book, a situation maintained until 1869. This first version was revised in 1812-13 under the direction of Dr. Livingston. See E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 324.

[23] Gunn, p. 330.

[24] Acts and Proceedings, I, 239 (October, 1792); and Humphrey, p. 294.

revised and published their creedal statements and constitutions. In October, 1788, the Synod finally decided that, since the Dutch Church was enjoying religious freedom under the protection of civil authorities, it had an obligation to translate its own ecclesiastical standards in doctrine and polity, not only for the benefit of its own members but also for their fellow-countrymen. Accordingly, it adopted a resolution ordering the translation and publication of the Articles of Church Government as declared at the National Synod of Dordrecht in 1618-1619.[25]

The Synod appointed an eight-member committee (again Livingston's name stood foremost), and requested them to complete their collection and translation of material in time for submission to the next General Synod in October, 1789. The year thus allowed was not realistic, with regard to the assignment, and the Constitution-making stretched over a four-year period. A Convention finally approved the completed document in October, 1792; it was printed and accepted in that form in 1793, and the Synod, which was organized under it in 1794, finally represented a "full-fledged American Church."

At the end of the first year's work, the Synod remarked only upon "a favorable commencement."[26] Yet this

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[25]For the full statement, including comments on the decline of the Dutch language, see Acts and Proceedings, I, 184-185, and ERNY, VI, 4348.

[26]Acts and Proceedings, I, 201.

body reflected an exuberantly optimistic and expansive mood that hardly seemed justified by the empty treasury, the wretched support of the Professorate, and the destitute College. In the Article of the Minutes immediately following the brief report of Constitutional progress it was noted:

> By reason of the happy extension of our Church far beyond its former limits, it is seen fit by the Rev. Synod that henceforth, in all their Ecclesiastical Acts, North America shall be substituted for New York and New Jersey. . . .[27]

Furthermore, in the future translations of their proceedings into the English language, the term "The Most Reverend" was to be substituted for the ancient Dutch title "De Hoog Eerwaarde" which had been translated "The Highly Reverend."[28]

That the pronouncements of the Synod of Dort as to Doctrinal Standards and Church polity should prevail as the basis for the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America was never a subject for debate. But there were many Erastian features in the Rules of Church Government (known as post-acta), which were completely inapplicable to the American scene. The problem of editing took on great importance for Livingston and Romeyn, who assumed

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[27] Ibid.; also ERNY, VI, 4352. The only apparent basis for this change to include "North America" seems to have been the ordination the previous May, of an applicant as missionary to Hardy County, Virginia. See Acts and Proceedings, I, 191-193.

[28] Gunn implies (p. 311) that Livingston and Romeyn were chiefly responsible for the drafting of the Constitution.

responsibility for the work. On May 12, 1790, Livingston wrote his colleague:

> I have only to observe that, under the third head, which is to comprise extracts from the post acta, solutions of questions, and subsequent acts and regulations of our Synod, you will need more attention to know what to leave out, than what to insert. The variety of cases which have occurred, and which will for ever arise in the Church, upon which some solution or determination must be made, are little less than infinite, and, from some particular circumstances attending them, are seldom found to be exactly alike. Nothing more can, therefore, be done in any church government, than to lay down general principles, and leave it to the Synods to apply these with prudence and care in the decision of particular cases. It will be safe in us not to descend too far to particulars in our publication, but only exhibit to the world the outlines of our views of Church discipline, and our leading principles and conduct.[29]

Nor were the difficulties involved in the translation of ponderous seventeenth-century Dutch to be avoided. Livingston wrote again, two months later:

> Upon looking over the acts of our first Vergadering [Synod of Dort], which contain the outline of our present Church government, I find it will not read well in English, to translate the whole verbo tenus, from the Dutch. Do you not suppose it would answer every purpose of publication, which is to convey the standards of our discipline, if the contents of our grand Artikulen were faithfully given in a good, easy English style, without restricting ourselves to a full translation of every word, which, as it was not designed for the press, so in many passages is not sufficiently accurate for that purpose?[30]

The committee report, submitted to the Synod in October, 1790, elicited several limitations upon their work. The ministers in New York City, because of their proximity

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[29]Gunn, p. 312; E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 512.

[30]Gunn, p. 313.

for consultation, were instructed to scrutinize closely the translations of the Articles of Church Order of 1619 and those of Union in 1771, in order to assure precise agreement with the intent of the originals. In addition, they were to prepare any commentary necessary to clarify sense and meaning. And if any articles were deleted, explanations were to be given for their omission. An extra session of Synod was agreed upon for the first week in May, 1791, to consider all alterations and additions. Should it prove necessary, a General Ecclesiastical meeting or Church Convention would be called in the autumn to decide whether the work of the committee should "be issued in full or in part, and in what language, or whether both in Dutch and English."[31]

Meantime, Livingston was pondering a proper title for the emerging Constitution--one that would indicate its origins and affiliations at a glance. He wrote on March 11, 1791:

> It is not a history of the Dutch Church as it is in Europe, which we are to compile, but a true and regular detail of the constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church in America. As our charters and our discipline refer us to the Synod of Dort, we must show that we build upon that basis, with such deviations as time and circumstances have rendered unavoidable. We have two sources from whence we draw our present constitution,--one, the Synod of Dort;--and the other, the resolution and fundamental articles agreed upon by our Churches, and ratified by the Classis of Amsterdam, in the name of the Synod of North Holland.--From these and some subsequent acts of our own Synod, our discipline is formed. If we mention these sources in the

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[31] Acts and Proceedings, I, 210-211.

> head or title, and then proceed to exhibit one regular system, without any circumlocutions or repetitions, it will appear more simple and connected, and will be better understood than a large translation, and explanatory notes, could possibly make it.[32]

In order to give proper credit to all the sources from which the new Constitution was derived, Livingston was led to propose an impossible title, one that would have frightened away many a prospective member from outside the Dutch community. "Suppose," he wrote, "a title like this was made."

> The Constitution and Form of Government of the Reformed Dutch Church in America, as established in the Synod Nat [ional] of Dort, 1618-19; and agreed upon in the Assembly held at New York, 1771-72, by and with the approbation of the Classis of Amsterdam, and finally ratified in Synod held in New-York, October, 1791.

Fortunately, he added: "This, or something shorter. . . ."[33]

The committee members wisely voted for brevity, both in title and content. In the extra session of Synod held in May, 1791, they recommended restriction of material so as to include only Doctrine, Liturgy and Polity, in order to reduce the size of the document and avoid perplexing "the English reader." All items that pertained only to the Netherlands Church were to be carefully pruned. Nevertheless, the provisions of the Constitution would furnish unmistakable testimony regarding its origins. The Synod instructed the committee to frame, out of these decisions,

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[32]Gunn, pp. 313-315.

[33]*Ibid*.

> a suitable plan which shall constitute the whole ecclesiastical discipline and government of the Dutch Reformed churches in America as now situated, and which shall be the only rule by which said churches are directed to abide, and by which they shall be known and distinguished as Dutch churches. This, in our estimation, will answer the expectations of the public, satisfy the desires of the civil government, and serve for the direction of all the members of our Church; since it will likewise appear from this plan, that the proceedings of the National Synod of Dordrecht are the basis of the government of the Dutch churches in America, cordially received and carefully adapted to its particular circumstances in this country; and that thus, the different charters may be ratified, and the attachment of the members of said churches to the Reformed Dutch churches in the Netherlands may be fully confirmed.[34]

In anticipation of an early completion of the committee's work, the President of the Synod was authorized to summon all the Classes to send every minister, with an elder to the Synod (as an ecclesiastical convention) scheduled to meet in New York the first Wednesday in October, 1791.[35] The purpose was to secure their joint counsel and advice in determining the final form of the Constitution. But the arduous work of the committee was not to be hurried. On August 20, 1791, Livingston commented: "I am so slow in my progress with the Acts of Dordrecht, that I know not whether I shall be able to accomplish your expectations."[36]

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[34] Acts and Proceedings, I, 217-219; ERNY, VI, 4358-4359; Humphrey, pp. 297-298.

[35] Acts and Proceedings, I, 218-219.

[36] Gunn, p. 315.

At the General Convention, which met from October 4 to 8, 1791, Livingston presented the English translation of the Articles adapted from those of Dordrecht although his work was not in a polished form. It was revised item by item, and the trio of New York ministers was charged with incorporating the alterations--hopefully to be completed in time for presentation at another extra session called for May, 1792.[37] A month later Livingston declared: "I will try, as the Lord shall give me strength, to attend to our constitution, and prepare a fair and accurate copy for the approbation and final decision of Synod."[38]

The revision was not without its frustrations. In March, 1792, he wrote, presumably to Romeyn:

> Upon looking over the papers, as they now stand corrected by the Synod, I find the first, third and fourth parts, may be easily brought into form, without alterations or additions of much consequence; but what to do with the second part, which respects our Ecclesiastical Assemblies, I do not yet know: as it now stands, it appears deficient. To make it intelligible, and answer the purpose of a standard for the information of all our members, I believe some additions will be found necessary. I have not yet digested particulars. . . .[39]

Later in the same month he again observed:

> I have discovered that to make the whole ready for the press will unavoidably demand more time than can be found previous to the Synod in May; I therefore, now put in a plea for an abatement to any promises on my

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[37] Acts and Proceedings, I, 226; ERNY, VI, 4361.

[38] Gunn, p. 315.

[39] Ibid., p. 316.

part, or injunctions on the part of the Synod for that purpose.[40]

Two months later, not yet armed with the final report, he was again on the floor before the extra session of Synod, where he informed the delegates that it would be necessary to add some "explanatory" articles to the Church Order of Dordrecht which had already been translated. But he added that some of the clarifying articles had been written. Therefore, God willing, it would be possible to present the final draft to the body in October.[41]

As good as his word, he appeared in October, 1792, with the finished draft of the explanatory articles. Here the final report was made. Commenting on the work which had begun in 1788, the Synod expressed its happiness at "seeing all the branches pertaining to this weighty subject completed and brought to the table."[42] After reviewing the Explanatory Articles one by one, the Synod, on October 10, ratified both the Articles and the translations of the Church Order. " . . . all the Rev. Brethren formally and solemnly recognized said articles as a just exposition of the nature and mode of the government and discipline received and established in the churches. . . . "[43] The Constitution was

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[40] Ibid. I believe Gunn wrongly ascribes this statement to the "following" May, (i.e., 1793); there was no Synod in May, 1793, so reference must be to 1792.

[41] Acts and Proceedings, I, 229; Humphrey, pp. 298-299.

[42] Acts and Proceedings, I, 235.

[43] Ibid., 236.

then recommended to all the "widely-extended" congregations for acceptance as the basis for ecclesiastical rule in the Dutch Reformed Church in North America. As one polemical church historian described the situation: "The Old Church of the Fathers at Dort was . . . fully equipped for her work in America."[44] Livingston and Linn, along with an elder, were given the responsibility for issuing the work.

Sensing the beginning of a new era for the Church, the Synod recommended to the Classes that they should bring to the next meeting all books and papers of the colonial Church, and of the Coetus and Conferentie factions. It further displayed commendable historical awareness, by directing them to furnish

> an accurate and definite account of the time of the formation of the congregations, and of the persons by whom it was effected, with an accompanying historic narrative of the most noteworthy events which have occurred from time to time, to the end that the same may be preserved among the papers of the Rev. Synod, as the historical documents of our Church.[45]

The long-and difficult task of constitution-making culminated in the Synod which met in October, 1793.[46] The

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[44]Van Eyck, p. 67.

[45]Acts and Proceedings, I, 241; E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 319.

[46]The German Reformed Church quickly followed the Dutch Church in declaring its independence from the Netherlands Church. In 1792 the Coetus of Pennsylvania appointed a committee to draft rules for an American Church; these were adopted by a Synod which met at Lancaster on April 27, 1793. It began its existence with 22 ministers, 178 churches, and about 15,000 members. See Stokes, II, 748;

course of the proceedings since 1788 was reviewed, after which Dr. Livingston arose to display a printed copy of "The Constitution of the Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America,"[47] comprising three hundred fifty-four pages. This happy occasion was recorded in the Minutes:

> . . . Synod received the same with full approbation and with thanksgivings to the Lord Jesus Christ, on whose shoulders is the government of the Church, and who hitherto preserved and blessed the Reformed Church, and enabled its members to present their Constitution in a manner which they regard acceptable to Him. . . . The Rev. Synod, therefore, with all earnestness, recommend this publication to their congregations.[48]

The adoption of the Constitution meant that many earlier Synodical acts on record--some of which had fallen into disuse--were superseded. A trio of ministers had been appointed in 1792 to examine and revise past legislation. The committee was continued at the next meeting, but no revisions resulted. Finally, (under the authority of the Particular Synod in 1794) they requested the new General Synod to make the necessary deletions, repeating their

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Humphrey, p. 307; Sweet, Story of Religion in America, pp. 290-291; Religion in the Development of American Culture, pp. 83-84.

[47]This is the name which appeared on the title page of the first edition of the published Constitution. It represents a change in the name assumed in 1789, which used only "North America." A further alteration took place in 1819 when the Synod incorporated the Church as "The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church." After 1840 sentiment developed for dropping the adjective "Dutch." In 1867 the present form, "The Reformed Church in America," was adopted. For the various names and their development, refer to C. E. Corwin, Manual, xiii-xiv.

[48]Acts and Proceedings, I, 246-247.

request in 1796 and 1797. No action is recorded in the Minutes of either body, although those of the Particular Synod carry the laconic entry: "Nothing occurred."[49] It would appear from the attitude of the General Synod that the need for revision simply did not exist, since the Constitution had superseded all previous legislation.

The first General Synod under the Constitution met on June 3, 1794, and it happily noted that the new Church Order had received a cordial reception in the Dutch churches. Its first resolution accorded well with its transformation into an American denomination, for it provided "that for the future, their minutes shall be kept in the English language, and that such minutes be considered as original and authentic."[50] When the Particular Synod met in October, it dropped the lemma for "Church Order" from its Minutes, "the object of this article having been attained." But one small sour note crept out of the Classis of Hackensack, where some of the members objected to

> the issuing of the explanatory articles of our Constitution in the English language only, at the same time praying that the same might also be translated and published in the Dutch.[51]

To this the Particular Synod replied that it was a matter for the superior body, the General Synod, to decide.

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[49] Ibid., pp. 236; 247; 447; 454; 461; 472.

[50] Ibid., p. 257.

[51] Ibid., p. 447 and ERNY, VI, 4370.

As we have seen, the eighty-four Articles of the Church Order drawn up by the National Synod at Dordrecht in 1619 were freely translated and, with some modifications, retained by the Reformed Church in America. However, seventy-three Explanatory Articles were formulated to indicate how the original articles were to be applied to an independent and self-governing church. Very briefly assessed, these dealt in great detail with ministerial applicants and the creation of ministers, their duties and obligations. Article XVIII defined the status of Reformed clergymen in unique terms of equality:

> All Ministers of the gospel are equal in rank and authority; all are Bishops, or Overseers in the Church; and all are equally Stewards of the mysteries of God. No superiority shall therefore be ever claimed or acknowledged by one Minister over another, nor shall there be any lords over God's heritage in the Reformed Dutch Churches.[52]

The single article of Dort concerning Professors was expanded into seven in 1792. The duties of elders and deacons also were greatly elaborated, both individually, and collectively as members of the Consistory.

The judicatory bodies above the congregational level were similarly treated in great detail. Perhaps as a concession to time and distance as well as to local and regional sentiments, the Classis was given the authority to examine students and licentiates, with the limitation that a Synodical deputy had to be present. However, if he

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[52]E. T. Corwin, Digest, xx.

preferred, a licentiate could request, instead, the right of examination by the Particular Synod. The President of the Classis was obligated to examine the state of discipline in the parishes of his Classis, and to discover if the schools and the poor were receiving proper attention. For the maintenance of sound doctrines, visitations were to be conducted by the Classis within its boundaries, but the procedures were left for each Classis to determine.

The authority of both the Particular and General Synods was carefully defined. Each Particular Synod, consisting of two ministers and two elders from each Classis, was to meet annually. Despite independence, Article Fifty of the Constitution required the Particular Synods to send a copy of their Minutes to the Synod of North Holland, "and express in their letters the desire of the Reformed Church in America, to preserve a connection, and cultivate a correspondence, which they highly esteem, and have found to be beneficial."

As first established, the General Synod, assembling triennially, was in the nature of a Convention, with all ministers in attendance, and one elder from every church. After 1812, the authority conferred in the Constitution was used to change from a conventional into a representative body with annual sessions.[53]

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[53] Acts and Proceedings, I, 441.

Perhaps the most interesting provision in the Explanatory Articles, and most indicative of the need for adjustment of the Dort Articles to American conditions, was number Fifty-nine, which dealt with white and Negro relationships, and provided for complete equality of members.

> In the Church there is no difference between bond and free, but all are one in Christ. Whenever, therefore, slaves or black people shall be baptised or become members in full communion of the Church, they shall be admitted to equal privileges with all other members of the same standing; and their infant children shall be entitled to baptism, and in every respect be treated with the same attention that the children of white or free parents are in the Church. Any Minister who, upon any pretence, shall refuse to admit slaves or their children to the privileges to which they are entitled, shall, upon complaint being exhibited and proved, be severely reprimanded by the Classis to which he belongs.[54]

The Constitution of the Dutch Reformed Church, as ratified in 1792, published and distributed in 1793, and placed in effect by 1794, was an extremely conservative document.[55] Its elements consisted of the Standards of

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[54]Explanatory Article LIX. The New York Society for Promoting Manumission was found in 1785, with John Jay as President. In view of the Reformed position on church membership of Negroes and slaves, there should, presumably, be some Dutch members. Unfortunately, due to scanty material the only assured Reformed member I can discover was Philip Schuyler.

[55]Despite some amendments, the Constitution of 1792 remained unchanged until 1833. In that year, the Church Rules of Dort and the Explanatory Articles were fused to make a new document; since that time the Church polity has been subjected to general revisions in 1874 and 1916. Modifications in the Liturgy were proposed in 1868 but not completed until 1882, with further changes in 1906. In response to agitation beginning as early as 1809, a new

Doctrine, the Liturgy and the Articles of Church Government,[56] all of which had been elaborately established at Dordrecht one-hundred seventy-five years earlier. Actually, the lines went back much further: through factional strife and the heat of national and religious war to sixteenth century Geneva and the logical mind of John Calvin. The only changes made at New York were necessitated by the new American relationship between Church and State, or because certain provisions were applicable only in the Netherlands.

The system of organization and government established in 1792 had been sketchily represented in the Articles of Union twenty years earlier. Thus a quasi-constitution had existed which the Synod had to expand and strengthen, rather than to alter greatly.[57] The republican features of presbyterianism were continued, and, based on geographical units, made possible an orderly growth of the Church in the future.

The Dutch Church was among the last American denominations to declare its independence and re-order its

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edition of the Psalm Book appeared in 1813, carrying one hundred seventy two additional hymns, but still without the music. E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 132; W. H. S. Demarest, Notes on the Constitution of the Reformed Church in America (New Brunswick: n.p., 1928). Prefatory Note.

[56]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 132. For a detailed analysis of the Constitution, see W. H. S. Demarest, Notes.

[57]Humphrey, p. 12.

structure and government.[58] Like the others it moved to centralization and unification, but beyond that point there was great diversity in timing, methods and results.[59] A few small Churches, poor in wealth and numbers, or weak in leadership and organization, such as the Moravians and Quakers, continued in their subordinate attachment to foreign bodies. The German Reformed Church began to assert its independence from the Classis of Amsterdam almost simultaneously with the Dutch Reformed Church, by assuming the right to examine and ordain ministers in 1791. The Coetus of Pennsylvania adopted rules for conducting its business in 1792, and formulated Rules of Church Discipline in the following year.[60] However, reluctance to snip linguistic ties delayed an English translation of the Heidelberg Catechism until 1810, and a division of the Pennsylvania Synod into Classes was not accomplished until 1819.[61]

Other denominations, such as the Congregationalists and Baptists, had already long possessed substantial independence as well as associational organization, and chose to

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[58]Hageman, p. 76.

[59]For the various ways in which other denominations handled details of Americanization, see Humphrey, pp. 167-356, and Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, pp. 54-90.

[60]Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, pp. 82-84.

[61]For a somewhat differing interpretation, see Humphrey, pp. 12, 305-310.

modify their structures only slightly. The Presbyterians, with an adumbrated organization already in existence, completed their arrangements between 1785 and 1789 through the process of ending European ties, drafting a constitution at the first General Assembly in Philadelphia in 1789, and adapting the Westminster Confession. Under somewhat greater urgency, the Episcopalians, Methodists and Roman Catholics created national Churches between 1784 and 1789, while various Lutheran bodies had set up independent synods by that time.[62]

For the majority of these denominations, there was no accompanying change in the doctrines which they had previously maintained. Only in the Methodist, Catholic and Episcopalian Churches were there efforts at theological alterations which would bring doctrine more into line with the new American spirit.[63] The Dutch Reformed Church, making no concessions to time or place, simply re-affirmed its allegiance to historic Calvinism. The doctrinal heritage thus preserved intact consisted of the Belgic Confession (1566), the Heidelberg Catechism (1568) and its Compendium (1608) together with the Canons of the Synod of Dort or Rules of Doctrine (1619). Of the latter, only the preface and conclusion were omitted along with the charges and sentences

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[62]Weisberger, p. 13.

[63]Humphrey, p. 12.

relating to the Arminians.[64] How well this static system of church doctrine and polity would comport with the political, social and religious trends already fermenting in the "young republic" remained to be seen.

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[64]Eenigenburg, p. 28.

CHAPTER VII

A PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT TO AMERICAN LIFE

Although the Reformed Church had achieved a Constitution and had assumed control of its own affairs in America, no complete amalgamation with American society was possible so long as most of its churches persisted in the use of a language which limited their ministry to a small ethnic group. Occasionally the clergymen had complained over the eagerness of some parishioners to discard their mother tongue. Yet the exclusive use of the Dutch language had been maintained in church and school for a century, whatever the encroachments of English in the domains of business, the courts, government and society. Displaying a stubborn attachment to their distant origins,[1] the Reformed clergy had used language as a shield to protect a cultural identity which was reflected in religion, education and customs. Although the Collegiate church in New York City had introduced the English language with De Ronde's abridged catechism of

[1]Even on the Kentucky frontier in 1796, the Dutch settlers requested the Synod to send a minister who could speak both English and Dutch, if not solely Dutch, so as to serve their "nation," as they expressed it.

1763 and Laidlie had begun his ministry the following year, almost all the other churches continued in the exclusive use of Dutch until after the Revolution.

The Church's responsibility for preserving this linguistic separatism is undeniable. Except for a few pieces, chiefly of historical interest, the Dutch had produced no indigenous literature during the colonial period which might indicate any widespread support for the language.[2] Unlike the Pennsylvania Germans, they never developed a colonial newspaper in their own tongue. Between 1708 and 1794 about fifty imprints in the Dutch language appeared in New York and New Jersey, of which at least thirty-seven were religious in nature, although a few were almanacs which appeared after 1741.[3] Some Dutchmen owned printeries, but even the acrimonious pamphlets of the Coetus-Conferentie schism had been printed in the shops of Zenger and the Bradfords, and others came from the beds of Philadelphia presses.[4]

When it became apparent that to persist in its linguistic isolation would mean the gradual extinction of the Church through the loss of its young people, the individual

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[2]For example, see Murphy, Anthology of New Netherland.

[3]Curti, p. 34; Wertenbaker, The Middle Colonies, p. 106. See also indices of the 14 volumes of Charles Evans' American Bibliography.

[4]ERNY, III, 2244; C. E. Corwin, Manual, pp. 396, 466.

congregations, one by one, began to follow the example set by the Collegiate church in 1763. The transitions from exclusive Dutch to overwhelmingly English usage in the Church took about two generations to complete. Gradually, English Bibles, hymnbooks and catechisms increased in numbers, until by 1810, English was in general use although it survived in remote rural areas for as much as two decades longer. By 1815 language no longer prevented a full assimilation of the Church and its members into the pluralistic mainstream of American life,[5] but until that time, few if any of the Consistories were untroubled by problems arising from the introduction of the "American" language.[6]

As the Church had been the instrument for the maintenance of the Dutch language, so now it became responsible for the change-over to English. The surviving Minutes of the Consistories testify, often dramatically, to the process by which the one language achieved equality with, and then supplanted the other. Although the young persons applied the pressure, it was the financial contributors who decided

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[5]Marcus Lee Hansen, The Atlantic Migration, 1607-1860, Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, 1961), p. 73.

[6]Within the next decade, all the forces of American nationalism--economic, political, diplomatic and cultural--which had been gathering since the Revolution were at their maximum. Whatever the War of 1812 did not achieve was completed by the Tariff of 1816, the Monroe Doctrine, and the continuous movement to the West. In the cultural area, Noah Webster had been busy since 1783 to establish a more precise "American" language.

most of the contests in the end. As in each congregation the ratio of subscribers favoring the English language increased over those using Dutch, the number of English sermons gradually mounted, first from one to two each month and then to a basis of equality, until finally Dutch was reserved for special or ceremonial occasions only. Or perhaps the singing of a Psalm or an afternoon sermon in Dutch would sometimes be offered to ease the nostalgia of the old folk, and mark the passing of ancient ways.[7]

From place to place, the introduction of English services proceeded at an uneven pace, and was attended by much whimsy and caprice. Henricus Schoonmaker, who died in 1820, was one of the last preachers to use the Dutch exclusively. He was an eloquent and polished speaker in that language, but was awkward and ineffective in English. When his congregations at Fishkill and Poughkeepsie asked him to begin preaching in both languages, he preferred to resign in 1774, and accepted a pastorate in northern New Jersey where Dutch prevailed.[8] In the Belleville, New Jersey, church, the transition was made too quickly from entirely Dutch

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[7]In 1823 James Van C. Romeyn preached a funeral sermon in Dutch over one of the most aged members of the Hackensack church (B. C. Taylor, p. 237). Thomas De Witt gave an address in Dutch at the laying of the cornerstone for the church at Bergen in 1841 (Ibid., p. 147), and at the closing of the Middle Dutch church, in New York City in 1844, he gave the benediction in Dutch (Thomas De Witt, p. 54).

[8]E. T. Corwin, Manual, pp. 706-707.

services to English in 1794; to prevent a schism in the congregation the Consistory ordered a return to Dutch services on one Sunday morning each month.[9] The records of the Kingston Classis reveal the precise moment of linguistic balance in that area. In the Minutes of 1794, both languages were used; the scribe returned to the use of Dutch for the next three years, but only English was used after 1798.[10] Except for a few staunchly conservative churches, however, the contest between the two languages had died away by 1825.

In New York City after the Revolution, John H. Livingston carried on a solitary ministry for four years with only an occasional Dutch service. When William Linn joined him in 1787, the situation remained unchanged although a dwindling number of Dutch advocates pressed hard for a Dutch-speaking pastor. Efforts were made to appease them, but several attempts to find a qualified person, extending even to the Netherlands, were fruitless until 1789 when Gerardus A. Kuypers accepted a call to preach only in Dutch at the Garden Street church.[11] As death diminished his audience, leaving him with little to do while his colleagues shouldered most of the parish work, the Consistory

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[9]B. C. Taylor, p. 305.

[10]Minutes of the Kingston Classis, Microfilm Roll 310 P.

[11]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 559; Thomas De Witt, p. 43.

decided that all services would be conducted in English. Kuypers demurred at this breach of his contract which expressly stated that he was to preach in Dutch. After repeated conferences, an agreement was reached in November, 1802, and appended to his original call; under its terms he agreed to change to English preaching within twelve months and share the work equally with the other pastors. The last regular Dutch sermon was preached in New York City late in 1803, concluding the movement begun by Laidlie in 1764.[12]

Despite their proximity to New York City, the churches of Kings and Queens Counties on Long Island were in no hurry to follow its example although English was introduced very early into the schools. At Flatbush it was initiated in 1762 when Peter Van Steenburgh became schoolmaster; his successor in 1773, Anthony Welp, was the last teacher required to teach Dutch.[13] Even the town records were kept in English after 1775.[14] Thus a very real "generation gap" opened between the young members who could not understand enough Dutch to appreciate the theological

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[12] T. W. Chambers, p. 24.

[13] Gertrude L. Vanderbilt, The Social History of Flatbush, and Manners and Customs of the Dutch Settlers in Kings County (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1882), pp. 51-52.

[14] William H. Kilpatrick, The Dutch Schools of New Netherlands and Colonial New York. U.S. Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1912, No. 12 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1912), p. 199. Even as late as 1840, old people meeting on the street greeted one another in English, and dropped easily into Dutch conversation.

intricacies of the sermons, and their parents who had difficulties with the English. When the pastor serving the six collegiate churches of Kings County tried to preach in English in 1788, the results were so disastrous he relapsed into Dutch sermons, a practice which he maintained until his death in 1824, although he occasionally managed to read a hymn in English. The demands of the younger members secured an English-preaching colleague, Peter Low, in 1792, who appeared in each church once every six weeks. Some Dutch services were held until 1825.[15]

Farther east on Long Island, the collegiate churches of Queens County continued the exclusive use of Dutch five years longer. Although the Baptismal Register at Oyster Bay changed to English in 1792, Reynier Van Nest, serving the combined congregations, preached in Dutch until his death in 1797, and that language was preponderant until 1802.[16] At Newtown, Dutch sermons were heard, but infrequently, as late as 1834.[17]

Across the Hudson at New Hackensack, just north of the Jersey line, the ratio of English to Dutch-speaking members was indicated on December 31, 1796, by an agreement

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[15]Sutphen and Bergen, pp. 12-13, 50; Vanderbilt, pp. 307-308; Greenleaf, p. 22.

[16]Wertenbaker, The Middle Colonies, pp. 113-114.

[17]United States Works Progress Administration. Inventory of the Church Archives of New York City, Reformed Church in America, p. 37.

reached by the Consistory, "meeting at Mrs. Hollett's house." In making a just division of the minister's services between the two languages, the members found "by the subscriptions that one-fifth of the service is to be performed in the Dutch language and the remainder in English."[18]

In New Jersey after the Revolution, the trend was steadily toward English in the churches, but victory was not assured until the decade between 1810 and 1820 because of the resistance in the Bergen area. In the Freehold and Middletown churches, the agitation for the use of English had begun as early as 1764, perhaps stimulated by its introduction in New York City. Under Benjamin Du Bois, who began his pastorate that year, the change was made without incident at Freehold, but the Middletown congregation consented grudgingly. However, by 1785 the Consistory determined that the preaching should be proportioned to the wishes of the fund-givers. The congregational vote was so overwhelming for English that from 1786 Dutch services were limited to one each year, and even then the minister was given the option of following it with an English sermon. With so few left to sing the old psalms, the Consistory added:

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[18]Tower, p. 172.

> That if for want of Dutch singers it seems expedient, the pastor, if he chooses, may have English singing and preach in Dutch.[19]

The impoverished churches of Six Mile Run and New Millstone combined to secure the services of John M. Van Harlingen in 1783. While each received half of his time, Six Mile Run stipulated that one third of his preaching should be in English; the other church divided his preaching evenly between the two languages.[20] In New Brunswick, all regular Dutch services ended with the death of Dr. Hardenbergh in 1790.[21]

The use of English had progressed so far in the Raritan Valley that the call to John Duryea in 1785, from the churches of Bedminster and Raritan, specified that his services were to be equally divided between English and Dutch.[22] The advance of the first tongue was so rapid that the Bedminster Consistory resolved on May 28, 1789, that its Minutes should thereafter be kept in English, and three months later it decided to hold all services in that language.[23] At this time too, many people of Dutch descent in

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[19]Martine, p. 54.

[20]Abraham Messler, Forty Years at Raritan. Eight Memorial Sermons, with notes for a history of the Reformed Dutch churches in Somerset County, New Jersey (New York: A. Lloyd, 1873), p. 227; E. T. Corwin, Historic Discourse, Millstone, 1866, p. 65.

[21]J. H. Raven in Tercentenary Studies, p. 233.

[22]Messler, pp. 196-197.

[23]Layton-Hayward, Bedminster Church, p. 29.

the community began to Anglicize their personal and family names. Also in Somerset County, the small united congregations of Harlingen and Neshanic called William R. Smith in 1794 to replace their aged Dutch-preaching pastor, with the understanding that he was "to preach in the English language exclusively, one Sabbath at Harlingen and two at Neshanic."[24]

In the strife-ridden churches of Bergen County, the introduction of English preaching was greeted with stubborn opposition among the heirs of the old Conferentie faction. Wilhelmus Eltinge was called in 1799 to serve the churches at Paramus and Saddle River. By the terms of his contract he was bound to preach both morning and afternoon services in Dutch for seven months; for the remainder of the year, the afternoon services were to be in English "to accomodate English hearers and to meet the taste and education of the rising generation . . . ."[25] By 1807 these terms failed to meet the needs of the "rising generation" and Eltinge, under their prompting, asked the combined Consistory to alter the terms of his contract, but without success. Three years later, when it appeared they might lose him to another church, they loosened enough to permit him to preach alternately in the two languages. When the call fell through,

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[24]Messler, pp. 260-261.

[25][E. T. Corwin], Manual and Record of the Church of Paramus (2nd. ed., rev. and enl.; New York: Published by Order of the Consistory, 1859), p. 65.

however, they insisted that he return to the original terms of the agreement. Backed by the younger element, Eltinge pressed for alternation of the languages. The Paramus church yielded to his request, but the Saddle River church proved adamant; they not only refused to attend the afternoon English service but also kept their children away.

The empty church disheartened Eltinge, who deplored the situation in a most unusual lament:

> . . . under these discouraging circumstances, your minister is gradually losing his habit of preaching English, and his stimulus to accuracy in said language; the Dutch language is daily and rapidly decreasing, and must perish within a few years, and thus your Pastor, now in the prime of life, become a useless shepherd in the Church of Christ, a sacrifice too great to be made for any congregation.[26]

The Saddle River people refused to make any concessions and when they denied further financial support to Eltinge, the Consistory had to make up his salary out of their own pockets. The minister finally tendered his resignation, and the relations between the two churches were dissolved in June, 1813. Elsewhere in the Hackensack Valley, the church at Bergen did not begin the alternation of the languages until 1806, and church records continued in Dutch for another three years.[27] Nearby, at Passaic, Henricus Schoonmaker, as mentioned earlier, preached in that language until his death in 1820.

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Wertenbaker, The Middle Colonies, p. 115.

On the middle Hudson, the general use of English was achieved rather late, despite the impatient promptings of the younger generation. In the so-called "Sleepy Hollow" church at Tarrytown, the parishioners rebelled against their new minister, Stephen Van Voorhis, for daring to use English in a baptismal ceremony in 1785.[28] It was hinted that his added sin of keeping church records in English was responsible for his brief pastorate of only three years.[29] Alternate English and Dutch preaching appeared at Kingston about 1799, although occasional Dutch sermons were heard as late as 1835. John Gosman, who replaced George Doll in 1808, was the first to use English exclusively.[30] Nicholas Van Vranken was so accomplished a linguist that he was able to satisfy both groups of partisans in his Fishkill church until his death in 1804.[31]

The preaching and the records at Poughkeepsie were entirely in Dutch until 1781, when Livingston served the congregation briefly. In 1790, the subscription paper of the next pastor, Andrew Gray, pledged him to preach in both

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[28]Reynolds, p. 297.

[29]John K. Allen, "Church in Westchester County" in Tercentenary Studies, p. 126.

[30]Andrew S. Hickey, The Story of Kingston: First Capital of New York State 1609-1952 (New York City: Stratford House, 1952), pp. 93, 111.

[31]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 862.

languages, although a new book of records was begun in English. Within three years the Consistory recorded:

> Having taken into consideration the great declension of the Dutch language, and conceiving that, by continuing the service in that Language so frequently as heretofore observed, would not only be injurious to the edification of the congregation at large, but tend rather to its decrease than growth.
>
> The Consistory therefore direct, that henceforth the service be performed in the Dutch Language every other Lord's Day in the forenoon, and the service at all other times in the English Tongue.[32]

When they called another pastor in February, 1794, no mention was made of Dutch; rather, they simply stipulated English preaching twice each Sunday. Fifty miles up the Hudson at Catskill, however, the services were completely in Dutch as late as 1812.[33]

To the north, in the Albany-Schenectady-Mohawk area, there were pockets where the Dutch language persisted, but its usage generally declined in the 1790's. Elkanah Watson, a much-traveled and well-informed contemporary was not entirely correct when he predicted in 1788 that the Dutch language would be practically unknown in half a century.[34]

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[32]A. P. Van Giesen, Anniversary Discourse and History of the First Reformed Church of Poughkeepsie (Poughkeepsie: n.p., 1893), p. 107.

[33]Charles Rockwell, The Catskill Mountains and the Region Around (New York: n.p., 1867), p. 74. See also Jessie V. V. Vedder, "The Church in the Catskill Country," in Tercentenary Studies, p. 332.

[34]Elkanah Watson, Men and Times of the Revolution; or Memoirs of Elkanah Watson, Including his Journals of Travels in Europe and America, From The Years 1777 to 1842, and His Correspondence with Public Men and Reminiscences

Although it had disappeared from ecclesiastical usage, a serious proposal was made in 1846 that suffrage should be denied to those who could not read both English and Dutch.[35]

At Albany, Eilardus Westerlo began to preach in English in 1782, perhaps on the occasion of Washington's visit to the city.[36] After his death in 1790, English was used exclusively, permitting some cosmopolitan adjustments before Albany became the state capital in 1797. Eighteen miles to the northwest, Dirck Romeyn accepted the pastorate in Schenectady in 1784, but it was ten years before he could introduce English on an alternating schedule, and then not without friction. The presence there of both Presbyterian and Episcopal churches and the threatened loss of the young people forced gradual concessions, so that by 1799 the ratio was two-thirds English to one-third Dutch, but completely English services were not achieved until after Romeyn's death in 1804.[37] The change-over in the Minutes came two years earlier. In the newly-opened districts of Albany and

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and Incidents of the American Revolution, ed. by Winslow C. Watson (2nd ed., rev.; New York: Dana and Company, 1856), p. 307.

[35]Arnold Mulder, Americans from Holland, The Peoples of America Series, ed. by Louis Adamic (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1947), p. 69.

[36]E. T. Corwin, Manual, pp. 906-907.

[37]Birch, pp. 94-95; Clayton J. Potter, "First Church, Schenectady," in History of Schenectady Classis, Reformed Church in America 1681-1931, ed. by William E. Compton (Altamont, N.Y.: n.p. [1931], p. 190.

Schenectady Counties which were occupied by Dutch settlers after the Revolution, the introduction of English followed the same regular pattern but at different speeds. The church at Niskayuna, founded in 1783, ceased to record Consistory Minutes in Dutch after 1800, but continued its sole use in the services until 1803, when it began the alternating program. Eight years later the congregation voted one hundred and seven to seven to eliminate Dutch entirely.[38] The Helderbergh church called its first minister and started its Minute Book in Dutch on December 14, 1793, but exactly three years later the Consistory met in the parsonage and adopted English exclusively.

On the upper and intermediate levels of church government, the transition was completed between 1794 and 1800. As we have seen, the General Synod used English from its beginning in 1794. On the Classis level, the New York body went over in 1790, Poughkeepsie in 1797 and Kingston in 1798. In New Jersey, the Classis of Hackensack maintained its Minutes in Dutch until August 20, 1799,[39] with New Brunswick apparently going over earlier in the decade.

Considering the long identification of the Dutch language with the Reformed Church in America, its hold was broken rather rapidly after the achievement of national

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[38]Cornelius P. Ditmars, "Niskayuna Reformed Church," in Ibid., p. 22.

[39]B. C. Taylor, p. 26.

independence. This permitted not only closer identification with the new nation, but also increased its potential audience. Of course, the great majority of Church members had long been bi-lingual, and the change had been demanded for many years. The process might have been completed even earlier but for the desire to avoid local divisions on the issue. For the most part, the calm judgment prevailed that concessions should be made to the aged and disappearing members for the sake of unity in a cause that was, in any case, regarded as inevitable.

Where the Dutch language endured, the earlier religious and social customs also tended to linger longer. As the language of the Church adjusted to the needs of an independent American society, a series of minor but related changes occurred in the traditional practices associated with the Reformed body. Each church was free to determine for itself the extent and speed of these adaptations. In one community the pressure of the young people was greater; in another, a preponderance of older members raised what was at most a temporary resistance to innovations. By 1815 or thereabouts, as with the language, an incomplete but substantial uniformity had resulted from the responses to new and dynamic social conditions.

The Reformed Church in America has been described as a "semi-liturgical" organization, meaning that it does not greatly rely on fixed and rigid ceremonies and forms of

worship.[40] The Constitution of 1792 simply confirmed the Liturgy adopted by the Synod of Dort, which provided forms for the celebration of the sacraments and for the ordination of ministers and Consistory members. There were also forms for discipline, marriage, consolation of the sick, and for fifteen prayers.[41] Except for the administration of the sacraments, however, all these forms were left optional with the local churches.[42] Doctrine aside, this situation permitted considerable latitude for the churches to adjust their services to local needs, and to appeal to non-Dutch members of the community. Actually, the order of worship varied greatly between Albany and New York, for example, although the component parts remained much the same.[43]

The disappearance of the homogeneous Dutch community forced the gradual abandonment or relaxation of religious and educational practices which had been maintained from earliest times. This situation was correctly diagnosed in the Constitution of 1792, where it was noted:

> The zeal of the Reformed Church for initiating children early in the truth . . . cannot be evidenced in the same manner in America, where many denominations of Christians, and some who do not even profess the Christian religion, inhabit promiscuously; and

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[40]Hageman, p. 113.

[41]E. T. Corwin, Digest, pp. 369-370.

[42]Eenigenburg, p. 60.

[43]Linn, Discourses on Signs of the Times, pp. 129-130.

> where schoolmasters can seldom be found who are members of the Church.[44]

As the idea of a public school system gained support in New York State, the responsibility of parents for religious training in the home was heavily emphasized. Nevertheless, it was recommended in the Constitution that parents in each Reformed church should prevail upon the local teacher to make their children memorize and repeat publicly in the school one section of the Heidelberg Catechism at least once every week.[45] It was fortunate that the achievement of public, tax-supported education was still many years distant, in order to permit acceptance of the idea. For if the dangers attending community schools were all too obvious, the new principle separating Church and State was still much too pristine to raise complicated Constitutional problems for an equally untried Supreme Court.

From its European inception, the Reformed Church had shunned the observance of numerous religious holidays.[46] The Constitution of 1792 reaffirmed the position that holy days were not of divine origin, and it repeated the

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[44] Article LVI, in E. T. Corwin, Digest, pp. lxii, lxiv.

[45] Ibid., p. lxiv.

[46] Ibid., p. lxx. Besides the Sabbath, churches in colonial times had been permitted to observe Christmas, Easter, and Whitsunday (Pinxter) and one day following each. In Albany, at least, the latter holiday was given over entirely to the Negroes. See Mary G. Humphreys, Catharine Schuyler, Women of Colonial and Revolutionary Times (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1897), p. 39.

sixteenth century observation that while they were perhaps intended to prevent evil and to edify the members, they also interfered with the processes of labor and production of goods and were conducive to idleness.[47] Therefore, the Church was content to celebrate only the Sabbath Day, officially, which continued to be strictly enforced.

Whatever the secular state of society in the 1790's, the Sabbath was rigidly observed in Dutch communities. In 1793, Francis Van der Kemp, a Unitarian, attended Sunday morning service at Schagticoke in upper New York. At noon, after church, he rode away surreptitiously for fear that the local constable might arrest him on suspicion of not having attended church. In that case, he would have had to return to the village to have his statement verified.[48]

All through the colonial period, marriages had been celebrated most often on Sunday, and with festivities which tended to ignore the injunction to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." As early as 1779 the Synod labelled Sunday marriage an impropriety, in an attempt to discourage them, and two years later banned them altogether, instructing ministers to oppose all irregularities on that day. This severe attitude was maintained until 1792, when the

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[47]E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. lxx. And see Linn, Discourses on Signs of The Times, pp. 779-781.

[48]Harry F. Jackson, Scholar in the Wilderness: Francis Adrian Van der Kemp (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1963), p. 106 and note.

prohibition was removed although the strictures against violating the Lord's day were continued.[49] Local attitudes governed the application, however. At Navasink, Benjamin Du Bois exhorted his people not to marry on Sunday "except in case of necessity."[50]

Sunday was also considered the best day for funerals--if a large attendance was desired. Like the weddings, the ceremonies for the departed had great significance as social occasions. In many places from Albany to New Brunswick, those who were invited to attend were furnished with tobacco, pipes and liquor, "a custom that was sadly abused," it was noted by a local historian.[51] Women generally did not attend the "services," but stayed in an upper room of the house. The funerals in the Albany area were especially noted for their "unseemly drinking" which, along with the expense involved, led to a movement to curtail both these extravagances. At a funeral just prior to the Revolution, it was reported that the corpse was carried to the nearby grove, interred without any ceremony although the clergy were present, and then all the mourners went back to the house of the deceased to smoke and drink.[52]

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[49] Acts and Proceedings, I, 244.

[50] Martine, p. 58.

[51] Sutphen and Bergen, p. 14.

[52] Humphreys, pp. 76-78.

Funeral sermons had been prohibited by the Synod of Dort, and this restriction was included in the Constitution of 1792. The dictum was widely ignored and eulogies were pronounced so often that in 1812 Dr. Livingston prepared a form for the burial service, which was rejected by the Synod. However, it did permit a few "seasonable words" at church, home or grave, along with a prayer and benediction.[53] The colonial practice, derived from Europe, of burying a beloved clergyman or a generous benefactor in the floor of the church continued as late as 1800. At Paramus, New Jersey, the Rev. Benjamin Vanderlinde (d. 1789) was later re-interred beneath the pulpit of the new church built in 1800.[54] Warmoldus Kuypers was buried in the floor of the church in Hackensack in 1797.[55]

Democratic tendencies as well as financial necessity ended the older practices of awarding church seats according to social rank, and of segregating the sexes. Under pressure from the young people, the agreement for the rebuilding of the Church at Hackensack in 1790 stipulated:

> The inside of the church shall be furnished with pews, without making any distinction between men's and women's pews.[56]

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[53] E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. 244.

[54] T. B. Romeyn, p. 304.

[55] B. C. Taylor, p. 203.

[56] Ibid., p. 192. Article IV.

But at Schenectady, the practice of seating men on raised benches along the walls, with the women apart in the center of the church, ended in 1814 with the adoption of the "English plan" of sitting in families.[57] At Albany, the sexes continued to sit separately during the 1790's; presumably this practice ended when they built a new church at the end of the decade. Of course, even after pew rentals were introduced, the best seating went to the most affluent members of the Reformed society. Where galleries existed, the seats were sometimes sold, but usually they were reserved for single people and Negroes, whether slave or free.[58] In the course of repairs and remodeling during this period, new-fangled stoves were installed in churches which hitherto had been unheated, and the old-fashioned high pulpits were lowered by four steps, favoring the necks of those who sat in the front seats.

The young people were greatly dissatisfied with the limited and traditional music permitted in the Reformed churches. Under Article Fifty-five of the Constitution, no psalms or hymns could be sung publicly in the service except

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[57] The First Dutch Reformed Church of Schenectady, New York, 1680-1944 (Schenectady: n.p., 1944), p. 8.

[58] A Familiar Conversational History of the Evangelical Churches of New York (New York: Robert Carter, 1839), p. 77 gives the number of Negro members of the Collegiate churches as nine in 1797. The Presbyterians had 12, Episcopalians, 140, Scotch Presbyterians, 1; Lutherans, 2, etc. There were about 2,000 Negroes in all New York City in 1797. Slavery ended in New York State in 1799.

those recognized and approved by the General Synod.[59] Singing in Dutch was much easier for the older members, and they were deeply attached to the ancient non-metrical versions of the Dutch psalms. As soon as hymns were introduced, with "English singing" (that is, with voice parts to the hymns), trouble developed in many of the conservative congregations. In 1804 the question arose in the already divided Saddle River church: "Whether the three parts or the tenor part only should be sung." The issue was appealed to the Classis of Paramus, which refused jurisdiction and referred the problem back to the Great Consistory of the local church.[60] More liberal-minded than many in the congregation they served, this body decided in favor of the new form of singing: "Resolved: That the three parts, viz: treble, tenor and bass should be sung in the River church." Peter Haring, the voorlezer, resigned over the issue but was induced to return.[61]

At Freehold, New Jersey, the younger set wearied of the same old tunes and chose new ones which their elders could neither sing nor enjoy. Numerous protests against the innovations forced the Consistory to act. On February 26, 1787, after reviewing the situation, the members issued a

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[59] E. T. Corwin, Digest, p. lxviii.

[60] The Great Consistory was a body composed of current members of the Consistory along with all those who had earlier been members of that body.

[61] T. B. Romeyn, p. 53.

series of masterly resolutions which reproved both groups while remaining non-committal over the issues. They concluded:

> Resolved, That the Consistory, not wishing to lord it over God's heritage, will not with stern command say to our congregations, you shall or you shall not improve nor practice in any collection of Psalm tunes whatever. We leave the Christian where God hath left him, to the liberty of his own conscience to sing in private what Psalm tune he please, and when he sings in consort, we recommend him to sing in order and decently, as the Apostle would have all things should be done.[62]

The introduction of part-singing also helped to end the older seating arrangements--at least in this church--for one of the resolutions provided: "the subscribers and singers shall have the preference to seat themselves wherever they choose, so as they may best suit for carrying in the different parts of music."[63]

Singing in the Dutch language gradually died away, even as the quavering voices which supported it, and with it disappeared the need for the services of a voorlezer and voorzanger. When Dutch singing was discontinued in the Bergen church in 1809, the position was retained, but the incumbent was given the altered task of recording deaths and funerals until 1835, when it devolved upon the sexton.[64]

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[62]Martine, pp. 53-54. Dr. Livingston's new Psalm Book, which included a compilation of hymns, did not appear until 1790.

[63]Ibid.

[64]B. C. Taylor, pp. 167-168.

Elsewhere in the Reformed churches, this post faded out in a similar manner.

Nor was politics neglected in the adjustment of the Church, its clergy and members, to American life. The ministers and most of the propertied members stood solidly in the ranks of the Federalist Party, and they committed the Reformed Church, as an ecclesiastical entity, to the same reputation. They were defending not merely the status quo of the social order, but also the authority of divinely instituted officials and the prerogatives of those upon whom God has chosen to smile. The old and established Churches violently attacked the Enlightenment ideas which had supported one successful revolution and launched an even bloodier upheaval in France. Jefferson, the embodied symbol of the Enlightenment and spokesman for the hopes of the masses, was the convenient object of their fear and hatred.

Unfortunately for the clergymen, the enemy was already within their own churchly bosom, as large numbers of the lower classes were infected with ideas originating in the forces of Democratic Equalitarianism and Humanitarianism. These somewhat related forces, destined to intensify in the course of the nineteenth century, created new and American tensions within the Church. Here the Church suffered from the growing pains of the new nation. As the Republic struggled to set out guidelines for policies which had no precedents, the Dutch clergymen clung to an older world, a

remnant of the cosmos inherited from Europe, which savored more of Reformation than Reason, a world in which everything--man included--had a fixed and settled place by divine appointment. To support this static view of society was virtually to uphold the Lord's work.

Although this attitude prevailed among the Reformed clergymen generally, few appear to have participated actively in the partisan politics which developed from 1795 onward. William Linn of the Collegiate church in New York City was easily the most energetic of the ministers in his support of the Federalists, and his participation in politics impaired his popularity with some members of his congregation.[65] Although he had been an early member of the Tammany Society, a social and charitable organization, he indicated his political disposition before 1800 by withdrawing, with other Federalist members, when the Society became too republican to suit his taste. But partisan distinctions were also reflected in the congregations. In 1798 the divided congregations at Schraalenburgh and Hackensack, already plagued by a long list of troubles, decided to add politics to the list. Sympathetic factions from each of the neighboring churches combined to hurl Federalist and Republican epithets at each other.[66]

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[65]Gunn, p. 372, note. E. T. Corwin wrote of him: "He took a warm interest in the politics of the day, which gave offence to those who would eliminate religion from politics." (Manual, p. 573.)

[66]B. C. Taylor, p. 188; Van Eyck, p. 273.

A new nation, especially a republican one, needed the cement of myth and hero to grow in nationhood. On the occasion of Washington's death in December, 1799, members of the Reformed communities united in memorial services, but they also drew nearer to other Americans in mourning the loss of a great leader. In New Brunswick, Ira Condict quickly composed and presented "A Discourse Commemorative to Washington."[67] Dutch churches from New York to Albany were festooned with funereal draperies and their ministers laboriously contrived elegiac tributes. In New York City, the Consistory appointed a committee to decorate the churches appropriately, and ordered a eulogy to be pronounced in North church. Bells with muffled clappers were to be rung as often as the committee deemed suitable.[68] A short time later, William Linn delivered a eulogy before the New York Society of Cincinnati,[69] and in February at Albany, John Barent Johnson presented his encomiums before the state legislators.[70]

If the average citizen was politically restricted or rendered powerless by suffrage qualifications, the rank-and-file member of the Dutch Church still could bring

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[67]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 387.

[68]Minutes of the Collegiate Consistory, "Liber H," pp. 49-50.

[69]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 573.

[70]Ibid., p. 545.

pressure to bear on their Church leaders, and did not hesitate to do so. During the Adams-Jefferson campaign of 1800, William Linn wrote a notorious anti-Jefferson pamphlet titled "Serious Considerations on the Election of a President." Addressed to the citizens of the United States, it was credited with provoking more Republican response than any other Federalist writing of the campaign. Citing several passages from Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, Linn flatly charged him (in the manner of Timothy Dwight) with a "disbelief of the Holy Scriptures; or in other words, his rejection of the Christian Religion and open profession of Deism." It was simply an attack on the candidate for his religious views:

> the election of any man avowing the principles of Mr. Jefferson would . . . destroy religion, induce immorality, and loosen all bonds of society . . . the voice of the nation in calling a deist to the first office must be construed into no less than a rebellion against God.[71]

A Dutch-American Republican did not hesitate to reply in defence of the Virginian; Tunis Wortman's answer was "A Solemn Address to Christians and Patriots."

After Jefferson's election, a "Committee of Citizens" made application to the Collegiate Consistory for permission

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[71]Noble E. Cunningham, The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1957), pp. 223-224. Also, Saul K. Padover, Jefferson: A Great American's Life and Ideas, abridged by the author. Mentor Books (New York: New American Library, 1952), pp. 116-117.

to allow the bells of the three Reformed churches to be rung on the night of March 4, 1801, in celebration of Jefferson's Inauguration. The request was denied by a vote of eleven to eight. The reason given was that it had not been usual to ring the bells for any inauguration except that of Washington, "after the momentous event of the adoption of our present Constitution. The Consistory judge it to be inexpedient that they should ring on these occasions."[72]

The rumblings of dissatisfaction which greeted this decision forced the fearful Consistory to meet on March 3, four days later, and reconsider the request. It was stated in the Minutes:

> Whereas it has since appeared that in consequence of said resolution great uneasiness and discontents prevailed with a great portion of members of the congregation and which unless seasonably prevented may be productive of consequences tending to disturb the peace and harmony thereof, in order to cultivate a spirit of accomodation [sic] and brotherly affection--
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> Resolved that the said Resolution of the 28th February . . . is hereby repealed--and that the sextons have permission to ring the bells.[73]

In their zeal to support an older view of society and to lay restraint upon the multitude of changes engulfing them, the Calvinist clergymen were in danger of losing touch with the common people and their aspirations. Fortunately, however, few were as extreme in their views as the

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[72] Minutes of the Collegiate Consistory, "Liber H," p. 208.

[73] Ibid., pp. 209-210.

Rev. John B. Romeyn, pastor of the church at Rhinebeck, New York. He refused to christen a baby for Thomas Jefferson, and the bewildered parents had to stand at the font and hear their child named for John Adams.[74]

The changes which took place in the traditional practices of the Dutch Reformed Church were only a small part of the greater movement by which the American people sought to create a national culture complementary to their new political identity. Under the standards of religious freedom and the separation of church and state, the restrictions imposed by political favoritism or establishment had been removed, and the principle of religious pluralism permanently accepted. The only limitations imposed upon a creed were those of social acceptability--the capacity to attract members, and of voluntarism--the right of individuals freely to associate or remain aloof. In a sense, then, the adaptations in language, custom and usage were self-adjusting, and needed only time in order to achieve a reasonable harmony with the demands of the American community. However slowly the process moved in some localities, the Americanization of the Reformed Church was assured.

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[74]Dixon Ryan Fox, The Decline of the Aristocracy in the Politics of New York, 1801-1840, ed. by Robert V. Remini. Harper Torchbooks (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 56. This story also appears in Padover's Jefferson, p. 120, where reference is made only to "a Puritan clergyman." Neither author gives the source of the anecdote.

At the start of this period of definitions, the relationship of the Reformed Church to the other American Protestant denominations needed clarification. If the population had remained under static social conditions and on the seaboard, this would have been a rather simple matter. But the call of free land and economic opportunity along with political equalitarianism sucked out masses from the long-settled communities, dissolving and straining established institutions, and created a westward moving frontier that would beckon for a century. Two generations before the phrase was coined, it was obvious to many that the Manifest Destiny of the nation lay beyond the mountains. And here the fate of nineteenth century Protestantism was also to be decided.

Man has ever shaped his institutions to his needs. To flourish on the frontier, religion had to meet the needs of the frontiersman in a raw environment. The prevailing attitudes were those of individualism, optimism, materialism and equalitarianism; the frontiersman sought equal opportunity to secure a portion of heaven, as of earth; and on equal terms with his neighbor. The Church that would capture his allegiance had to be portable, Arminian, and emotional. The Dutch Reformed Church was ill-equipped to meet these terms. As one church historian expressed it,

"It's Westward Ho, but we can't go."[75] When the roll was called out yonder, the Reformed Church was missing.

There were many reasons why the Reformed Church was unable to respond successfully to the call of the West. Two are of extreme importance: it lacked the classically trained ministers upon which it insisted,[76] and it refused any compromise with Arminian doctrines. It is ironic that just as half of New England was streaming through the backyard of the Dutch Church, the Synod refused support for centralized theological training. And just as New England Calvinists were watering down their doctrine or shelving it altogether, the Constitution re-affirmed the allegiance of the Church to the iron pronouncements of Dordrecht.

The other reasons for the failure to move westward are numerous but subsidiary. It is true that the members of the Reformed Church were fewer in number than other ethnic and religious groups, but many of the Dutch were equally adventurous in taking to the western road. It is also true that some denominations were better located geographically to respond to the calls from the frontier. The continuing

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[75]Eenigenburg, p. 62.

[76]In 1772 there were 100 churches and 41 clergymen; in 1784 the number had declined to 85 churches, with 32 pastors serving 53 congregations. A decade later as the Constitution went into effect, the Church was in worse circumstances than before the war, with 116 churches, of which about 40 were vacant, and 40 ministers. The number of pastors was one less than in 1792, yet 16 more churches had been added.

use of the Dutch language and the word "Dutch" in the denominational name prevented a more friendly reception in new communities, and the rejection of emotional techniques dulled the Church's appeal. It is unlikely that rigid church discipline was any more attractive to the individualistic pioneer than rigid doctrine. The financial resources of the Church were non-existent, and as late as 1795 several individual churches were still recovering from the material effects of the Revolution. And finally, the Church lacked an evangelistic attitude; the missionaries it sent out were primarily directed to those who were members or supporters of the Church, and not to the unchurched or the luke-warm.

The movement into the transmontane areas had begun before the Revolution, and continued all through the war. As the fighting ended, migration accelerated for a variety of reasons, following three main routes from the older states.[77] From New England, masses of Yankees leap-frogged into New York and outward along the Mohawk Valley. Another stream crossed the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers and wound its way through the mountain passes of Pennsylvania and Maryland in the direction of the Ohio River. A third swarm disappeared into the foothills of western Virginia and the Carolinas and emerged in the rich meadows of Kentucky

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[77]Sweet, The Story of Religion in America, p. 298.

and Tennessee. From its venturous members moving along each of these lines the Reformed Church received calls to follow them with spiritual assistance, and it failed them.

As early as 1765 Dutch settlers from New Jersey had moved into York and Adams Counties on the southern boundary of Pennsylvania, west of the Susquehanna River. In each county, churches were founded under the authority of the Classis of New Brunswick, and the one at Conewago, Adams County, (near present Gettysburg) increased to about one hundred fifty families. At the end of the war, newcomers arrived from Bergen and Somerset Counties in New Jersey, and requests for ministers now began to flow back to the Classes they had left. The Classes, absorbed by their own post-Revolutionary problems, were unable to meet these petitions, and in 1784 began to forward them to a Synod which was no better equipped to cope with them.

With an empty treasury, a weak college, and a decentralized system for preacher-training, the Synod was unable even to supply the calls from its old and established churches. At the same time, it refused to lower the educational requirements of its servants, although it acknowledged the great opportunities which awaited on the frontier. In 1784 it noted:

> The new settlements which are now occurring in the respective States of the land, and will daily increase, present the most favorable opportunities for the extension of our churches and the diffusion of the pure doctrines of grace, especially since a considerable

> portion of them are composed of persons originally belonging to the Reformed Church or heartily devoted to the same, whereby, with a Divine blessing the number of our congregations could, in a short time, be at least doubled, if we had ministers who could be employed by the Rev. Body among them as missionaries, with sufficient means for their support.[78]

The Synod correctly assessed the situation at that early date, but refused to take the necessary steps. When it received reports that in spite of warnings students continued to preach without having completed their training, it declared in 1787:

> The Rev. Body ordain, that no student of Sacred Theology shall ever be permitted to treat any proposition, statement and defence of doctrinal points during the time of public religious service in the presence of any congregation.[79]

The first concern of the Synod in 1783 had been to salvage and revitalize the churches which had survived the war and were immediately beset by floods of freethinking and infidelity. The Classes were urged to assess the needs of the congregations within their boundaries, but the response was less than enthusiastic and only those in New Jersey complied fully. Nor did the Synod ignore the migrants passing in their midst. In 1786 they acknowledged their "bound duty to extend and advance Christ's Kingdom," and (neglecting to say how it was to be done without resources) directed the Classes

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[78] ERNY, VI, 4319 (May, 1784).

[79] Acts and Proceedings, I, 163.

> to fix their attention in tender care upon congregations and neighborhoods still lying in common and destitute of the preaching of the Gospel, especially on those portions of our widely-extended land where daily new settlements are made, that the same may not remain scattered like sheep which have no shepherd.[80]

From this time until 1799, a section of the Minutes was hopefully headed "Church Extension," and a committee appointed to create the necessary program. Realistically, this group limited its considerations to areas where those already joined to the Dutch Church had settled. It reported in 1788:

> . . . that in consequence of the progress of the settlement of this country, many members of the Reformed Church, and persons otherwise pertaining to it, have located themselves in various new settlements, without the pale of established congregations, whereby they are in danger of being led away by destructive errors, or at least, drawn away from our fellowship; whereas, if gathered together and formed into ecclesiastical societies, they would greatly enlarge the body of our own church.[81]

It recommended the collections taken in the churches be forwarded to the Synod which would use them to send missionaries (regular ministers and licentiates) to the dispersed settlers. Meantime, as if to underline the need for action, the village of Saratoga in the upper Hudson area petitioned for a pastor, and its request was turned over to the nearest Classis--at Albany--to answer.[82] To assist in bringing services to settlements without organized churches

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[80] Ibid., 150.

[81] Ibid., 181.

[82] Ibid., 149.

or outside Reformed jurisdiction, the Synod in 1788 ordered the Classes to report them, along with their own vacancies, so that candidates might be appointed to visit these communities.

Unfortunately, the plan of the Synod met with a poor response in the churches of the Classes. A year later, in 1789, about forty pounds had been collected, but three of the five Classes either had taken no action or made no report.[83] The Kingston Classis noted on July 7, 1789, that the congregations simply were not in a position to contribute anything to the support of the Synod's plan, and that most churches could hardly pay their own preachers.[84] Nevertheless, the Synod expressed the hope it would soon be able to engage "upon reasonable and Christian terms," one or more missionaries to visit the backwoods settlements.[85] For the moment, however, it urged the clergymen at Albany and Schenectady to visit and preach at these northern places during the autumn and coming winter.

Weak as it was, this Synod action came none too soon. At the extra session of May, 1789, as work on the Constitution began, Dr. Hardenbergh presented a letter from settlers in Hardy County, Virginia, requesting the

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[83] Ibid., 198.

[84] Minutes of the Kingston Classis, Microfilm Roll 310 P.

[85] Acts and Proceedings, I, 198.

ordination of Jacob Jennings so that he might serve their small community near the headwaters of the Potomac. Jennings, a pious medical doctor, had formerly been an elder and member of Hardenbergh's church at North Branch, New Jersey. Upon moving to what is now West Virginia, he found no church within sixty miles, and was induced to minister to the spiritual as well as physical needs of the people. Now he traveled four hundred miles to appear in person before the Synod, and, although delayed by bad weather, managed to arrive during the session. Under the circumstances, the Synod decided to permit his examination; they acquitted him of his theology, found him "more or less acquainted with the learned languages," and licensed and ordained the doctor. Significantly, this liberal action--the first taken under their newly assumed independence--was not erected into a more liberal change of policy by the Synod. Jennings was assigned to the jurisdiction of the Classis of New Brunswick, in lieu of any closer body, and sent off to his charges.[86]

His ministry in Hardy County failed to prosper despite the best of intentions. In May, 1791, Jennings complained to the Synod that his people, of whom probably only a small proportion were Dutch, were unable to support him. He requested release from his Reformed connection, in order to move to a wholly Presbyterian community. Reluctant to

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[86]*Ibid.*, 191-192.

lose his services, the Synod sent him twenty pounds and the advice that, if he insisted on a move, he should report back to the Classis, where "some respectable congregation" could be secured. Jennings dropped from the Synod records at this point, but those of the Presbyterian Church reveal that he transferred to them in 1792.[87] Because of its inability to keep pace with moving members, the Dutch Church would lose many more to the Presbyterians in the next three decades.

As the Classis nearest to the Southern and Middle frontiers, the New Brunswick body received appeals from several groups of settlers which it could not satisfy due to lack of ministers and funds. The Dutch communities in York and Adams Counties, Pennsylvania, west of the Susquehannah had established churches at Conewago and Hanover in the decade preceding the Revolution.[88] Toward the end of the war, a considerable number of migrating New Jersey Dutch used these villages as staging areas; some eventually followed the meandering Susquehannah northward as far as central New York; others turned southward to the Ohio and Kentucky shores. Members of this latter group crossed at Maysville in 1780,[89] and with other bands of Reformed

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[87]E. T. Corwin, Manual, pp. 544, 970.

[88]Ibid., pp. 955-956.

[89]This date was established from a pair of historical markers near Frankfort, Kentucky, which indicated "the religious and civic center of the Low Dutch Company." They purchased about 1700 acres from "Squire Boone" in

settlers which arrived in the next fifteen years, took up large tracts of land within a fifty-mile radius of Lexington. The most notable of these concentrations was on the Salt River, in Mercer County, near present-day Harrodsburg.[90]

At the General Synod of October, 1790, the New Brunswick Classis exhibited a letter (evidently not the first) from this settlement, nine hundred miles away, requesting a minister. The Synod had no means of accommodating this remote but loyal attachment, yet it did not want to ignore it. The Classis was authorized to reply to the letter and to take these people under its wing--which called for some wing.[91] Before any exchange of correspondence occurred, an anonymous member of the Reformed Church visited the Kentucky settlements in 1793, equipped with a sharp eye and a gigantic curiosity. Well before the much-publicized appearance of James McGready in Logan County in 1796, he reported a vigorous and vulgar religious activity by preachers from a half dozen denominations, "some of whom made use of expressions that would by no means be acceptable to our congregations."

1784 and 1786. Information furnished by Mrs. Marvin Shoemaker, Holland, Michigan.

[90]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 1027; Charles Scott, "The Reformed Church: Its Missionary Work at Home," in Centennial Discourses, p. 508.

[91]Acts and Proceedings, I, 209.

This observer reported that the Low Dutch "in that country" numbered nearly five hundred families, and were in general very moral and strict in their observance of church forms.

> These people are at present in a good deal of confusion and no wonder they consider themselves as a people forsaken by the Church to which they formerly belonged and from which they have long waited for help; They would before now have fallen in with other denominations, but many of them are firm friends to our Church Constitution and very loth [sic] to part with our Church in forms, besides still entertaining some hopes that our Synod will yet provide for them.[92]

There was great pressure from other denominations, especially Separate Baptists and Methodists, to break this attachment to the Reformed Church, and with some success, for there was much dissatisfaction with the Synod for its neglect, and with the Classis of New Brunswick for failure to answer their petition.

The Salt River settlers sent additional appeals to the Classis and to Dr. Livingston in 1795, urgently stating their plight, and indicating the terms they were prepared to offer any minister who settled among them. They had already raised three hundred dollars, and hoped quickly to increase the yearly salary by two hundred more.

> . . . we do in the name of our Lord Jesus desire of you Revd Classis to aid and assist with all possible speed. It is further the sincere wish and prayer of us, that in case you could not send us a minister agreeable to our wish, that is one who can preach both English and

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[92]Anonymous letter dated January 7, 1794, "1782 Papers," Microfilm Roll 102 P, Boxes 1 and 2.

> Dutch, that we then have a speedy supply, either in the Dutch or English language, to establish a consistory, to preach, baptize, etc., as there are at present upwards of forty children to be baptized. And further, as we are like to be a scattered people, we hope a speedy remedy may take place. Our Desires are Great, our case is distressing, our church affairs and religion in many respects lamentable, though we have through the blessing of God yet so far [remained] united.[93]

Finally in 1796, after considerable prompting from the Synod, a young candidate of twenty-three, Peter Labagh, agreed to make the trip to Kentucky provided he could be ordained as a missionary before he left. After a shortened course in Theology with Dr. Livingston, he received a certificate on July 9 which attested to his training. Twelve days later he was ordained by the Classis of Hackensack of which he was a member; provided with thirty pounds of mission funds, he set out for Kentucky on horseback. Upon reaching the Salt River settlements, he brought the christenings up to date, organized a church of about one hundred members, and momentarily tidied up the ecclesiastical household. However, the Synod deemed the unsettled state of the region and the great distance from the main body of the Church to be obstacles too great to overcome; it was considered improbable that the denomination would ever reach so far.[94] Labagh withdrew from Kentucky and returned to

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[93]Letter from the People of Salt River, Kentucky, to the Classis of New Brunswick, dated August 13, 1795, "1782 Papers." The letter to Dr. Livingston, dated only "November, 1795," was very repetitious.

[94]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 216; Acts and Proceedings, I, 473.

New York in 1797, accepting a pastorate at Catskill the following year.[95] After further fruitless letters to the Synod, the Kentucky Dutch gave up; they built a crude but sturdy church in 1800, and two years later hired a Presbyterian to minister to them. In this state, they maintained a separate existence until 1817, when they entered the Presbyterian fold. The failure of the Virginia and Kentucky missions ended any attempts by the Synod to maintain contact with its adherents south of the Ohio River.[96]

Efforts to supply the settlers on the Susquehannah and Delaware Rivers were little more successful, and the limited achievements were only temporary. Once again, the New Brunswick Classis received the appeals, as the nearest agency; in its impotent condition it could only forward them to the Synod. Small sums were beginning to come in from the collections taken in the local churches, and there was about one hundred fifty dollars in the missions fund in 1791. The Synod instructed the Classis in May, 1792 to reply to the Susquehannah churches "telling of our tender regard and hopes to send licentiates in the autumn." They appointed the Reverend Andrew Gray of Poughkeepsie as missionary and commissioned him to make a six weeks tour of the area. While he was gone, arrangements were made for other

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[95] E. T. Corwin, Manual, pp. 562-563.

[96] The missionary efforts of the Reformed Church never extended into the area north of the Ohio River--the old Northwest Territory.

ministers in the Poughkeepsie area to fill his pulpit. Reporting to the Synod in the following year, Gray could claim some successes, despite the "peculiarities of work in a frontier community." He revived the church at Hanover, and in Adams County he received forty-five members through his preaching--a modest but not discreditable harvest, considering his short stay. Well-pleased with his work, the Synod paid his expenses of fifteen pounds and rewarded him with a gratuity of four pounds and eight shillings.

Gray's circuit established the pattern for the missionary efforts which the Reformed Church followed until about 1820. From one to three ministers or licentiates were annually dispatched for six or eight week tours and paid by the Synod while their congregations were covered by neighboring pastors or by unordained candidates. As the frontier pushed westward, these circuits were left behind, and the device became more like a weak home or domestic missions system for the scattered hamlets and isolated farmsteads where people from the Dutch Church had settled. Nothing more could be done in a situation where many of the old and established churches lacked ministers.

In the same year (1792), with requests for ministers flooding in, the Synod sent out three young candidates to supply the numerous churches without pastors. David Bogert, age twenty-two, was chosen to visit both sides of the Hudson in the area above Albany; Stephen Ostrander, a year older,

was assigned to churches westward from Albany and Schenectady; while William Kuypers, twenty, was to serve on the Delaware. There was only one candidate available the following year, and he was assigned to spend fourteen weeks working in all five Classes. The growing importance and activity of the Albany Classis was indicated by the fact that he was to spend half his time there. In their annual session of 1793, the Synod took inventory of the missionary situation; there had been a net increase of eight ministers and six churches, five of which were situated in the Albany Classis, and one in New Brunswick; the other Classes remained stationary, indicating where the activity was.

By 1794, in response to many calls from the upper Delaware and Susquehannah, the new General Synod detailed two ambitious circuits for Stephen Ostrander and John Cornelison, both young men of twenty-five. (Following these rivers, Dutch settlers had penetrated to an area on the Pennsylvania border which lay about one hundred miles due west from Kingston on the Hudson.) As a result of their efforts the first church established by missions was organized at Tioga, Broome County, New York, in the Chenango Valley near present day Binghamton. The brief visit left no permanent pastor and although there was small chance of securing one, Joshua Mersereau wrote to Dr. Livingston, expressing the appreciation of a grateful community:

> In behalf and at the request of the Consistory of the Church of Union, in the County of Tioga, I return you

> our sincere thanks for the attention you have been pleased to show by sending the Rev. Mr. Cornelisen & the Rev. Mr. Ostranda to visit our remote (but plentiful) country at my request and for the purpose of organizing our congregation. This they have effected much to our satisfaction.[97]

Their hopes that supplies would continue to be sent until they were capable of supporting a settled pastor were not fulfilled until 1808.[98] The name of the church would seem to indicate a union of settlers from several denominations.

Similar missions were sent out in the years 1796-1798, and keeping pace with the moving settlers, penetrated to the Finger Lakes District at Lakes Owasco and Seneca,[99] perhaps even pushing to within fifty or sixty miles of Lake Erie. Although a few churches were organized, there were no trained pastors available to serve them. The Synod repeated its pleas for men and money, but they were as little successful in the one as in the other. During the decade, each of the Classes had annually raised from ten to twenty-five pounds to support the Synod's activities, and the missionary teams could be supported for six or eight weeks only.

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[97]Joshua Mersereau to John Henry Livingston, August 4, 1794. John Henry Livingston Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscript M., New York Historical Society.

[98]E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 1037.

[99]For itineraries showing the extent of the Church's penetration of Western New York, see General Synod Papers, June, 1797, Microfilm 102 P, Boxes 1 and 2. See also Abstract from last original Synod Minutes in Acts and Proceedings, I, 271.

Because the Synod was so limited in the men and money at its disposal, it leaned heavily upon the Classes to supervise church extension activities within their own areas. As a result, these responsibilities were forced upon the Classes situated on the main travel routes. The Classis of Albany carried the greatest burden, but it also was the most energetic and successful in dealing with the "near" frontier.

In 1783, the areas north of Saratoga and west of Utica contained only a few hundred settlers.[100] The Mohawk Valley quickly became one of the great routes to the West, not only for Dutch settlers but also for a year-around flood of New Englanders. Dirck Romeyn of Schenectady reported that fifteen hundred families passed his door by sleigh and ox-drawn sled during the winter of 1791.[101] In the winter of 1795-1796 a Dutch citizen of Albany noted with astonishment: "Twelve hundred loaded sleighs passed through the city within three days, and on the 28th of February five hundred were counted between sunrise and sunset."[102] Not all of them moved on; by 1803 the Dutch element was outnumbered by Yankees who had settled among them and taken

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[100]Spaulding, New York in the Critical Period, p. 31.

[101]Jackson, p. 81.

[102]William W. Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840. Vol. II, The Presbyterians; A Collection of Documents (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1964), p. 40.

control of the local government, to the disgust of the natives.[103]

The Classis strove heroically to meet the challenge, borrowing on its credit to send out missionaries and organize new churches, in compliance with the Synod's requests.[104] Between 1792 and 1800, the Reformed Church added forty-four new churches; thirty-four of these were under the auspices and in the jurisdiction of Albany.[105] With some notable exceptions, most of these churches were within one hundred miles of the Hudson, for the Classis activities were primarily in the adjacent Scoharie County and in Montgomery and Herkimer Counties lying on the Mohawk.

Furthermore, most of these new churches were formed from migrant members of the established churches; rather than gain for the Church, they represented a great drain on the limited resources and vitality as it struggled to accompany the settlers westward. Statistics reveal the strain on the Albany Classis. In 1800 it had only seventeen pastors to serve fifty churches, leaving twenty-six without any regular supply.[106] Nearing exhaustion, the Classis of

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[103]David M. Ellis, et al., p. 192.

[104]Acts and Proceedings, I, 180-181, 199.

[105]Scott, Centennial Discourses, p. 510. Also see Appendix C, "Churches, 1792-1800," pp. 525-526.

[106]Acts and Proceedings, I, 313-316. There was a total of forty-two vacancies in the whole Church; New York (City) Classis had only one.

Albany was finally forced to call on the Synod for relief in 1800. But not before it had launched the Church on an odd Canadian venture.

Manifesting a peculiar insensitivity to currents of American nationalism just beginning to develop, or perhaps illustrating the weak and undeveloped state of the national character, whereby local and institutional loyalties prevailed, the Classis in 1798 began to support mission churches in Upper Canada (Ontario). This activity, lasting for two decades, diverted the Church's meager resources and distracted its attention from the American West where these might have been more profitably concentrated.[107]

In addition it seems most inappropriate that the Reformed Church, having just freed itself from "foreign entanglements" should have attempted to establish a "client" relationship with the nationals of another country. Aside from the fact that almost no organized religious activity existed in Ontario, the presence of a small band of Dutch loyalist refugees may also have drawn the Reformed Church into this undertaking.[108]

In 1798 the Classis of Albany employed Robert McDowell, evidently a Presbyterian of Montreal origin but licensed by the Classis, to tour the Black River country

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[107]Some gain resulted, of course, along the New York routes leading to the St. Lawrence.

[108]Scott, Centennial Discourses, p. 509.

in Jefferson County, adjoining the St. Lawrence where it debouches into Lake Ontario. Crossing over into Canada, he found a great neglect of religion. Within the year he quickly organized six churches, three of which became his regular pastoral base after 1800.[109]

These early achievements--they can hardly be referred to as successes at this stage--created a misplaced optimism in both Classis and Synod. McDowell reported his results to the Classis in 1799, and this letter, together with others from the new churches, appealed for assistance with men and money. The over-extended Classis (it had sent out six other representatives in addition to McDowell) raised the problem in the Synod of 1800, which appointed a three-man committee to examine what missions should be attempted and what men could be secured for the work.[110] They reported that while the New York frontier presented a large field for missionary activity, the most promising prospects lay in Canada.

At this point, the Synod assumed the direction of all missionary efforts; however, the Classis of Albany, because of its proximity, was to superintend the activity on the north and west and submit annual reports. Compared to

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[109] E. T. Corwin, Manual, pp. 217-218, 594, 944-945.

[110] Acts and Proceedings, I, 292. By this time all missionary activity in Virginia, Kentucky, and on the Susquehannah had ceased, due to the lack of men and funds. See also E. T. Corwin, "The Church in the Near West, Canada and the West Indies," Tercentenary Studies, pp. 405-406.

the assault made on the Mississippi Valley by the Baptist, Methodist and "Presbygational" bodies, the Reformed Church efforts were insignificant. In relation to its resources, however, it probably represents a maximum effort, for in 1800 the denomination was composed of fifty-nine ministers and one hundred thirty-nine churches, forty-two of them without pastors, and only five candidates.[111] The rapid extension of the Church necessitated a reorganization in 1800; the five Classes were increased to nine, and divided between two Particular Synods.

The concentration of efforts on the Canadian churches deflected attention away from normal extension work within the Classes. The Classis of New Brunswick complained that there were many destitute communities within her bounds which should share in the Synod's missionary funds. Unfortunately the sums contributed for missions were very small; it was estimated that up to 1800 a total of not more than one thousand dollars was spent on extension activities, and from 1800 to 1820 never more than four hundred dollars each year.[112]

In 1806, the General Synod revised the administration of missions by creating a standing committee of four clergymen and four elders, but the headquarters remained at

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[111] Acts and Proceedings, I, 316.

[112] Scott, Centennial Discourses, p. 511; E. T. Corwin, Manual, p. 217. The first bequest to Missions was not received until 1804. (Acts and Proceedings, I, 304.)

Albany, and it continued the old method of short tours, using ministers from established congregations. This system prevailed until 1819 and another reorganization took place in 1821.

Meanwhile, McDowell wrote from Canada in 1806, pleading for support.

> The Baptists frequently send missionaries through this country; and missionaries from Connecticut have lately visited these places. The truth is, unless they have immediate assistance, they will be rent into so many sects that they will be unable to support a minister of any denomination. To me they look for assistance; what shall I do? To you, Reverend Fathers and Brethren, I must look for assistance . . . . And if no assistance can be obtained from the Reformed Dutch Church, he considers himself under the necessity to advise them to make application to the Presbyterian Church for supplies.[113]

In response, new teams of missionaries visited Canada in 1806,[114] 1809 and 1810, and within those years eight new churches were organized, the last of them at York (later Toronto). Thereafter, however, the Canadian churches began their decline, because no permanent pastor was ever provided.

In 1812, the Missions Committee, undoubtedly as a result of the war with Great Britain, advanced the first doubts as to the Church's policy. The members stated in their report to the Synod:

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[113] Acts and Proceedings, I, 352-353.

[114] For an interesting account of the 1806 team, see Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. I, No. 1 (April, 1826), pp. 34-35.

> It is . . . believed that all has not been done which ought or might have been done, and that it is very problematical whether what has been done has been done to the most advantage of the cause.[115]

While the majority voted to proceed with the existing system, and to continue the support of the Canadian churches, the War of 1812 and the rising post-war nationalism completed the work of neglect and apathy. In addition, several of the Classes decided that the needs within their own boundaries should receive priority. Although missionary teams visited Canada in 1817 and again in 1819, the Canadian venture was quietly dropped after that date, with the removal of the missions headquarters to New York City. The derelict congregations either joined the Presbyterian denomination or disappeared entirely.

During the period 1800-1821, some seventy-one new churches had been organized, not all of them on the frontier, of which thirty-three eventually were lost. Those years saw central New York firmly settled, but by New Englanders rather than the Dutch.[116] Of the sixteen Reformed churches founded there, only five survived beyond 1842. The Synod survey for 1821 set the denominational strength at one hundred eighty-seven churches and ninety-eight active pastors, of whom about thirty had been recruited from other

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[115] Acts and Proceedings, I, 424-425.

[116] David M. Ellis, et al., pp. 188-191.

denominations to make up the Reformed deficit.[117] Charles Scott, writing half a century later, summarized the grim results of three decades of work by a handful of devoted men:

> Up to 1821 not a permanent missionary had been employed . . . not a pastor had been directly located; not one church had been aided. Brinkerhoff, Labagh, Manley and Palmer had turned back; Mandeville and McDowell had gone to the Presbyterians, Gray had fallen with none to take his mantle; and thus of our long line of thirty-five gospel outposts on the frontier extending from Virginia through Pennsylvania and New York, to and beyond the St. Lawrence, only five remain to this day . . . . The total loss of the thirty years was forty-four congregations.[118]

After the debacle on the frontier, the Church retreated to its old and familiar home-grounds bordering the Hudson, where there was much work to be done among its own people.[119] The goals it set were more in keeping with its limited resources, and while it cooperated with interdenominational missionary societies, church extension within the Classes became the main task. From this point to mid-century, growth came slowly from natural increase of its families and from intermarriage.[120] By carefully conserving

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[117]Centennial Discourses, Appendix F, "Churches, 1801-1821," p. 528.

[118]Scott, Centennial Discourses, p. 512.

[119]Magazine of the Reformed Dutch Church, Vol. I, No. 2 (May, 1826), p. 60.

[120]Statistics for the Church in 1830 show: 185 churches, with 44 vacant; 150 pastors and 7 candidates; families 8,814; number in the congregations, 51,538; and communicant members, 11,713.

its resources, it was able to establish a firm foundation from which to launch a notable program of Foreign Missions a decade or two later.

The failure to advance into the Mississippi Valley with the frontier may have retarded the nationalizing of the Church. On the other hand, it probably helped to preserve intact its doctrinal orthodoxy and unity. There are strong indications that if the Reformed Church had been able to keep pace with the frontier denominations, it would have faced the same frontier influences which led to Arminianism among the Baptists and Methodists, or denominational schism, as with the Presbyterians. The secession of churches which in 1822 separated to form "The True Dutch Reformed Church" occurred mostly in the frontier districts and in the Mohawk Valley, although instigated at Hackensack. Scott observed of those men and churches:

> Ten Eyck of Owasco, had become the cause of intestine dissentions; Brokaw, of Ovid, had been deposed, and through all the mission churches of the North was spread the spirit of disorder and secession.[121]

The Dutch Church, by not accompanying the frontier, also missed the democratic-equalitarian influences prevailing there, and remained a staunchly conservative Church.

In the end, however, the Dutch Reformed Church was fated to enter the heart of the continent, but not through the ministrations of the Church as it became localized in

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[121]Scott, Centennial Discourses, p. 512.

New York and New Jersey. At mid-century, a new wave of immigrants arrived from the Netherlands, the victims of religious harassment by a state church, and settled in Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa. Here they repeated in a foreshortened manner the whole process of Americanization which their predecessors had taken two hundred years to achieve.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

The Dutch Reformed Church became an American Institution through the sporadic stages of a process which was protracted over more than two centuries. This gradual transformation was the result both of a novel environment and of cultural interaction; it began slowly during the brief tenure of the Dutch, was vastly forwarded under the British, and achieved its final form in the early years of the American republic. Through all its permutations, the Church displayed the stamina and tenacity characteristic of bonds arising from religio-ethnic sources.

Originating in the urban and commercial society of the Netherlands, where it struck deep roots in the middle class, the Reformed Church was ill-adapted to the dispersed and rural population of a frontier society. Lacking in numbers and neglected alike by Company and Mother Church, it failed to acquire the foundations necessary for institutional growth and development. The English conquest eliminated all formal ties but the slender ecclesiastical link with the Netherlands Church.

Throughout history, religion has been the strongest force binding captive, oppressed and minority groups. The Mormon record is an example from our own history. The histories of the Calvinist Boers of South Africa and of the French-Canadian Catholics of Quebec are indications that conquest need not lead to assimilation. Led by their clergy and sequestered by their language, they merged their ethnic and religious heritage into a community of feeling which was so strong that it thwarted their conquerors. These victories were achieved at a price, however, for isolation from the civilization which created them resulted in stagnation.

Weak as it was, with only a few clergymen, the Dutch Church in America assumed the role of guardian for the religious and ethnic identity of its people. It rejected the prospect of assimilation and chose security in self-isolation, which in the end proved to be an armor without magic. Some of the Dutch refused to live too close to their conquerors and moved up the Hudson or to New Jersey, with the result only of straining further their puny institutions. A small number refused to live under the British flag. But most continued their lives as before, feeling secure in the guarantees of religion and property. They sat through long Dutch sermons, their children recited the Catechism at the Dutch school, and they followed the Dutch customs undisturbed.

The Dutch element remained a majority for two generations despite the ending of immigration from the Netherlands. During this period, the static quality of life hardened into habit and tradition; at the same time, the clergy successfully resisted the attempts of several governors to undermine Dutch religion and culture. After 1710, there were no legal or administrative threats to the security of the Church, and an illusory appearance of permanence was accorded to a situation which was anything but secure. From the first, Dutch unity was more apparent than real.

The role of New York City in the process of Americanizing the Dutch Church might easily provide a separate study. Here the two cultures met and mingled at their chief point of contact, and the English, while not necessarily superior, had the advantage of power. Here was the closest approximation of the tolerant, cosmopolitan urban life of the Netherlands and Europe. And here in both secular and religious activities occurred a slow and invisible erosion of the Dutch isolation.

The entering wedge was language, and it was Dutch which gave way during the work-day week. As the English population increased, their tongue became the medium of business, administration and the courts. The Dutch language corroded under the influence of the shops, the theater, and all the social relationships of a mixed society. In the

ecclesiastical world, even the most conservative Reformed ministers developed an easy relationship with their Anglican counterparts and this was based on the assumption of mutual interests. The City clergy were the intermediaries with Europe for all the American churches, and they came to exercise prestige and power within the small denomination. Here, in the most cosmopolitan setting of colonial America, the Collegiate congregation was the oldest, most numerous and richest of the Dutch churches; its pastorates could always be filled from the Netherlands while others stood vacant.

But there was another Dutch world also, across the Hudson in New Jersey and stretching beyond Manhattan all the way to Albany. This was an isolated and rural world, where a majority of the Dutch Reformed community lived in small river towns, agricultural hamlets, and remote farms. The center of community life was the church; the effects of English culture penetrated slowly; and tradition was more easily established and maintained. More often than not they had no pastor; the routine Sunday service consisted of the reading of the forms, the slow singing of familiar Psalms, and the weekly installment of the Heidelberg Catechism. In this rustic setting, habits of custom, language and religion became ingrained by repetition and the passage of time, and were bolstered by the cycle of inbreeding. Among these people Church and language found their staunchest adherents,

and, for a while, there was little religious or cultural erosion.

The innovations in thought and method which dated from the ministry of Frelinghuysen shattered the facade of Reformed unity. A variety of differences involving all branches and geographic areas of the church was fused into one great issue concerned with the maintenance of the Netherlands connection. The ensuing debate, lengthy and violent, resulted in a half-victory for the forces of Americanization and semi-autonomy for the Church. The outbreak of the Revolution prevented any consolidation of the victory. The struggle greatly weakened the Church, both in prestige and membership, for many constituents were ashamed of the image presented by their institution and changed their allegiance to the Anglican and Presbyterian bodies.

Although many battles remained to be fought, between the factions favoring or opposing American autonomy, the critical period actually appeared midway in the eighteenth century, when the decision was made by the American party to proceed with training and ordination independently of the Netherlands Church. Prior to 1747, less than ten percent of the American clergy had received some sort of irregular ordination in America. All others either had come directly from the Netherlands or had gone there for study and ordination. This relationship, while not involving large numbers, was an important means of perpetuating the ethnic and

religious ties. During the Schism, this practice declined greatly, and after 1766 Livingston appears to have been the only American to repeat the cycle. The decline of this practice meant that no more students visited the homeland to sit at the feet of the learned Doctors of Theology at Leiden, Utrecht or Groningen. Reverence for the exclusive use of the Dutch language decayed among clergy and laymen and popular pressure increased for its abandonment. There was a loosening of that historical and cultural connection which had kept alive the memories of William of Orange, the Eighty Years' War, and the Golden Age of exploration, commerce, art and architecture.

One of the problems for which no satisfactory answer has yet been found is to discover why the Netherlands Church clung so tenaciously to a relationship in which it was so powerless. From the time of the English conquest there was no way, legally, by which they could enforce their ecclesiastical decisions. Repeatedly they complained of their inability to bring peace to quarrels within the American Church, and of the time-consuming discussions and correspondence which the connection occasioned their committees. Perhaps it was because the Mother Church in religious affairs, as much as the English in political, was reluctant to recognize the growing maturity of colonial subordinates.

Soon after mid-century, the opponents of Americanization, both lay and clerical, were reduced to a minority.

Led by the New York pastors they fought a bitter rear-guard action, only to be deserted by the Collegiate Consistory first in the matter of the Kings College proposal and then in English services. One is led to the conjecture that the ministers of the New York area, long powerful, were striving as much to retain their own dominant position at the mouth of the Hudson--and the Reformed world--as they were to maintain the Netherlands connection.

It is ironic that the one liberal action of the Reformed Church--the support of the Revolution--hastened the final and official separation from the European Church. American political independence led to proclamation of the principles of separation of Church and State, and of religious equality for all denominations. This was the signal for the completion of ecclesiastical independence. The long years of the war disclosed the inadequacy of the half-way measures of 1772 and the vacuity of the relationship.

After the Revolution, the ethnocentric separatism which earlier had served to protect the religious identity of the Church and its members now threatened to become a wall segregating it from the fast-changing conditions of the contemporary world. It was in danger of being ignored completely by fellow Americans. The formal process of adaptation was accomplished within a decade by the newly created Church bodies, leaving the local congregations to proceed at their own speed. So strong was the historic pull of the

"old country," however, that the Church clung to the word "Dutch" in its title for another three quarters of a century, even though that word put off many a prospective church member because of its European connotations.

It is necessary here at the conclusion, as we did at the beginning of this work, to emphasize that this is not an account of the Americanization of the theology or doctrine of the Reformed Church. If it were, there would be little to put on paper, for the Church remained committed to the form of Calvinism enunciated more than two centuries before at Dordrecht, including the famous "five points." Yet it is frustrating to ignore this spiritual allegiance to the past, for not only does it underline the consistent conservatism of the Reformed faith, it is also a reminder of the foundations of American history in post-Reformation Europe.

The achievement of American political independence replaced the older Church and State relationships with religious freedom and the equality of all religious bodies. With the severance of the older ties, denominationalism became the institutional form through which American Christianity organized its resources and activities. Sidney E. Mead has demonstrated that the creation of the denominations between 1783 and 1850 was the most significant movement in American Protestantism, determining its shape for the nineteenth century. The simultaneous rise of the westward moving frontier provided a spacious environment in

which the movement could expand and thrive. Within that period, the Dutch Reformed Church, like many other bodies, became an independent and autonomous denomination; but it failed to experience fully the plastic effects of the moving frontier.

In his stimulating essays on denominationalism, Mead identified and described a complex of factors and ideas contributory to its rise. These included sectarian and anti-historic tendencies, voluntaryism, revivalism, mission enterprise, the "flight from Reason," and denominational competition. Any assessment of the Dutch Reformed Church on the basis of these elements, or their use for comparison with one of the frontier denominations, would reveal (as I have tried to show in the later chapters of this dissertation) why the Reformed Church was left far behind in the wake of American Protestantism in the nineteenth century.

Unlike the left-wing bodies, the Reformed Church refused to repudiate its historic past; its mission enterprises withered on the frontier; its voluntaryism failed to attract; and it rejected revivalism and its emotional techniques. Like the other groups, it opposed the Rationalism of the Enlightenment, yet it insisted on the need for Reason in interpreting the Scriptures. Eliminated from denominational competition on the frontier, it fell back upon its old precincts, and contented itself with smaller gains. Its leaders had been permitted a glimpse of the promised

land, but could not enter it. Meantime, the "shape of Protestantism" was determined in the Mississippi Valley.

While the Church thus conformed outwardly to the necessities of religious pluralism in America, its insistence upon orthodox Calvinism preached by highly educated ministers was out of step with the main currents of American Protestantism which was being bent to the needs of the frontier. This need not be considered as a criticism. To some men consistency is a jewel; to others, it is a hobgoblin. We need not debate the issue here. But the Reformed Church cannot be accused of contributing to the de-emphasis of doctrine which makes a shambles of Protestantism today. Throughout the nineteenth century, the Reformed position was counter to that advanced by Nathaniel W. Taylor, Horace Bushnell, and the "muscular Christians."

With its independence, the Reformed Church took the place on the right wing of Protestantism which it occupies today, along with several Presbyterian groups and some minor denominations and sects. It preaches a stern religion which few since the days of New England Puritanism have cared to accept because of its rigors. It has paid the price for consistency by remaining small, but there are other reasons for this too. As the sociologist Donald H. Bouma has observed, the earmarks of an earlier period have not quite disappeared; in its love of status quo the Dutch have fed upon themselves, and have inbred "biologically, culturally

and theologically." The Church has remained confined to those limited sections of this country where the Dutch have settled, and has not become a truly "national" Church.

In colonial times, a democratic government was not one of the Church's more obvious features. In doctrine it remained highly authoritarian and the republicanism of its polity was somewhat misleading. The members of the local Consistory, under the Constitution, could be elected by the congregation, but selection of its own replacements by the Consistory was recommended. Yet democratic tendencies--or at least popular instincts--manifested themselves all through the two centuries of our study, showing that they were neither stifled nor dead. Most examples occurred in the New York City area, where it was possible for people to meet and communicate. But it is also highly likely that, had the Church been able to go to the frontier in any numbers, it would not have preserved intact its doctrine and organization in the traditional form.

By the Calvinist system, the minister had the right to warn and discipline. Often he was the only educated person in the community, and authority and respect gravitated to him. Nevertheless, there was a sort of ecclesiastical <u>noblesse oblige</u> connected with his position, for he was the shepherd of his flock and supposed to set his people a worthy example. Since he was required to be classically

trained, there was obviously less of anti-intellectualism in the Reformed than in the frontier churches.

The great majority of the clergymen, judged in the context of the intellectual and social climate of their time, must be paid an unstinting tribute. They were a small but devoted band, always too few for the scattered congregations of the Church. They entered the ministry voluntarily and willingly, often citing some mystic call from Heaven. As highly educated men, they left their homes in Europe or they returned from study there to serve rural congregations, for few could hope to attain a New York City pastorate. If they survived the Atlantic passage, they settled down to serve their parish, often for life. They studied, preached and Catechized; they baptized, married, and committed to the earth. They braved the weather and followed the dark forest paths in their circuits, and shared the triumphs and disappointments of their people, as the records amply show. Their reward, often enough, was in colored shells, beaver skins, firewood, bushels of corn or depreciated currency, and frequently short of the contract. They lived quiet, uneventful lives, occasionally brief, always difficult. They were not saints but human beings, and they suffered the weaknesses of men, as the records also show, but there is no need to dwell upon the fact. By their dedicated activities, they contributed their talents to the settling of the land, the development of American cultural

life and institutional foundations. Our history would be poorer without this slender but distinctive thread in the larger fabric of American Protestantism.

But even these dedicated servants of the Lord were not strong enough to stand against the forces which were conspiring to make the Church less Dutch and more American. The story has a quality of inevitability which reminds one of the Greek tragedies. Lured by the seductive, tolerant, urban, cosmopolitan pluralism, on the one hand, and hammered by the stern, isolated and remote frontier on the other, the Dutch Reformed clergy had simply engaged themselves in an unequal struggle with a new world.

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