

The Reformed Churches

~ Chronology, before 1900 ~

- 1614 At this early date, there was an unorganized membership along the upper reaches of the Hudson River in the area of Fort Orange, New York--present-day Albany.
- 1628 The Dutch in New Amsterdam had a pastor of their own--Jonas Michaelius. Their church is the oldest church in America with uninterrupted ministry.
- 1664 When the English took possession of New Amsterdam, there were Dutch churches thriving in Albany, Kingston, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and at Bergen, New Jersey.
- 1752 John Frelinghuysen began a seminary in Raritan, New Jersey.
- 1776 A large majority of both the ministers and laypeople of the Reformed Church supported the American Revolution.
- 1792 The Dutch churches in America created a general body and five particular bodies, with a constitution. Two names were in use for the group--Dutch Reformed Church in North America and Reformed Dutch Church in the United States of America. In 1819 it was incorporated as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, and it became the Reformed Church in America in 1867.
- 1847 The Christian Reformed Church had its North American origins in Michigan. After a series of name changes, it became the Christian Reformed Church in North America. From 1850 until 1857, it was affiliated with the Reformed Church in America.

In the American colonies, they formed into four groups: (1) from Holland, the Reformed Church in America; (2) also from Holland, the Christian Reformed Church; (3) from the German Palatinate, the Reformed Church in the United States; (4) from Hungary, the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America. The third group above came to be known as the Evangelical and Reformed Church, now merged with the Congregational Christian churches in the United Church of Christ.

~ Records, Resources ~

The Reformed churches have used a modified presbyterian form of government. Records are in the hands of the local churches. Some of the older records can be found in historical libraries or even city and town libraries. Church archives have usually maintained ministerial records.

Several Reformed groups exist today, with similar roots; these are the three major bodies:

The Reformed Church in America

The Christian Reformed Church in North America

The Hungarian Reformed Church in America -- the name established in 1958 to what had earlier been called the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America.

Christian Reformed [Dutch]
Colonial Origins Collection
Calvin College and Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI 49056

Holland society of New York [General]
Manuscript Collection
122 East 58th
New York, NY 10022

Archives of the Reformed Church in America [General]
New Brunswick Theological Seminary
21 Seminary Place
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Eden Archives [Evangelical and Reformed]
475 East Lockwood Avenue
Webster Grove, MO 63119

Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society
Franklin and Marshall College
555 West James Street
Lancaster, PA 17603

~ Bibliography ~

Brouwer, Arie R. *Reformed Church Roots*. New York: Reformed Church Press, 1977.

DeJong, Gerald F. *The Dutch Reformed Church in the American Colonies*. 1978.