

LETTER from the Lutherans at New York to the Amsterdam Consistory. April 13/23, 1669

Grace be unto you and peace through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Reverend, Highly and Well Learned, Honorable, Very Estimable, Prudent, Very Discreet Members of the Consistory, all very kind friends and highly honored, deserving brethren in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Whereas your reverend, highly estimable body, in response to our constant and insistent prayer, considering the great lack among us of a godly pastor, have been thinking of means to supply us therewith and have indeed carried out the same by sending over and promoting our present beloved pastor, the Reverend Mag. Jacobus Fabricius, we not only have to acknowledge this favor with the utmost gratitude, but, as is proper and Christian brotherly, [to assure your honors that] it will be an everlasting memorial among our successors. Especially, also, at this first opportunity, although all things are not yet complete, as our beloved pastor has not yet been at Fort Orange³⁷ and we therefore do not know what our brethren at Fort Albany have planned with one another for the support of our pastor. As soon as our pastor comes down again, we shall advise your honors of everything.

We hereby inform your honors that we were like so many lost sheep, without a herder, partly because, due to the prolonged hoping and waiting, we were to some extent scattered, and partly because many among us doubted whether we should be helped. Thus we lived between hope and fear until God, through your Reverences' great provident care sent us the Reverend Mag. Jacobus Fabricius, our dear and worthy pastor, who arrived here on the first of March, S. N. Anni hujus,³⁸ for which we are all most highly rejoicing in God.

As soon, now, as our pastor arrived, he immediately called on the Hon. Governor General and notified him of his arrival. He respectfully insisted on *liberum Exerctium Religionis Aug: Confess;* which was also granted him, on condition that he should first take the oath of fidelity to His Majesty the King of England, which he also did in the Secretary's office on March 2, N. S., or Feb. 20, O. S., as is to be seen from the *Copia testimonii juramenti, sub lit. A.* Thereupon, at the urgent request of our pastor and dear brother, the elders, on the 2d of March, went to the Governor General and requested ratification and confirmation of our former privilege, which they also obtained on the 20th of February, O. S., as is to be seen from the *Copia Privilegii, sub lit. B.*

Thereupon our pastor publicly began to preach, to visit the sick, to baptize, to marry and to administer Holy Communion. On *Dominica Quinquagesima*³⁹ he preached the first sermon and on *Dominica Oculi*⁴⁰ he celebrated the first Communion. There were 45 persons at the Lord's table and we cannot conceal the joy of our hearts at the happy success, since we see not only a growth of this small congregation, as now and then many many scattered Evangelical Lutheran members, of whom heretofore we had no knowledge, reveal themselves and come to us, but also, on *Dominica Palmarum*, a 50 year old Negro was baptized and named Emmanuel. There are also others whom our Rev. Magister is already busy instructing and to whom otherwise we look forward with great hopes.

However, this is not without creating great bitterness among our adversaries; yes, it causes great enmity, unwill and slander and they seek by all sorts of means to draw the weak unto themselves. But it does us no harm, for our reverend pastor practises that *Praesta te virum*, and is both a modest and bold man, so that, if he were not, great detriment could be done to us. But he has already got so far that they avoid him, and this he does by means of unusual modest courage and boldness, both in his sermons and in common conversation and that without naming the Calvinists. By the most prominent persons of the English nation our pastor is held in high regard and esteem, which is a great joy and consolation to us. Yes, some of the Calvinists now come in large numbers to the preaching, and this because their three ministers have in these Easter holy days held not more than one service, whereas our Rev. Magister held six, including Good Friday. Now we lack nothing but pious, godly patrons, who will take our need to heart and think of some means of assisting us, in order that we may build a church and procure other necessities for that purpose.

Wherefore we pray the Reverend Consistory that they may be pleased, in our name, to take up a collection among their congregation, in order that this our recently begun divine worship may be propagated at this far distant place, to the glory of God and the salvation of many people, which will be to your Reverend Consistory's honor and praise before God's countenance and serve as an everlasting memorial to our successors. We have no reason to doubt [your assistance in the matter], but [put], and always have firmly put, our trust therein, which [trust] is further strengthened in the highest degree by the sending over of our reverend pastor. We hope, therefore, that you will continue to be favorably inclined and helpful to us. We hereby faithfully commend your reverences and honors and the entire Christian congregation, for great prosperity and our strengthening, to the protection of Jesus Christ and remain jointly,

The 23d/13th April 1669.

Your reverences' faithful friends and fellow-brethren in Christ Jesus our Lord, the deputed elders and leaders of the Christian congregation adhering to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in New York, on Manhatans.

P. S. What is still lacking we shall write to the Rev. Consistory by the other ship.

[Addressed:] Reverend, Highly and Well Learned, and Honorable, Estimable, Prudent, Very Discreet Gentlemen and Friends, the joint Consistory and members of the Christian congregation adhering to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession at Amsterdam, in Holland.

[Endorsed:] N: York 1669. Received in Consistory the 19th June

37 Fort Orange and Fort Albany, the modern Albany, are used synonymously; there was only one Lutheran congregation in this section.

38 i.e., new style of that year.

39 Quinquagesima Sunday. The date was February 21, 1669, old style, or March 3, new style.

40 Oculi Sunday, the 3rd Sunday in Lent. The date was March 14, 1669, old style, or March 24, new style.

Taken from *The Lutheran Church in New York, 1649-1772* pg. 69

Amst. Luth. Ch. Arch. [Portfolio America.]