

American Minute with Bill Federer Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the Moravians, & the Pietist Lutherans: Young Christians who changed the world!

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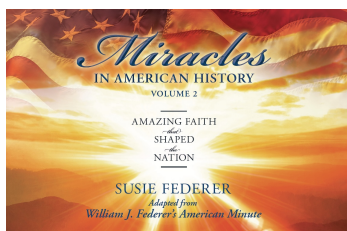
Pilgrim Governor **William Bradford** wrote:

"As **one small candle** may light a thousand, so **the light here kindled** hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to **our whole nation.**"



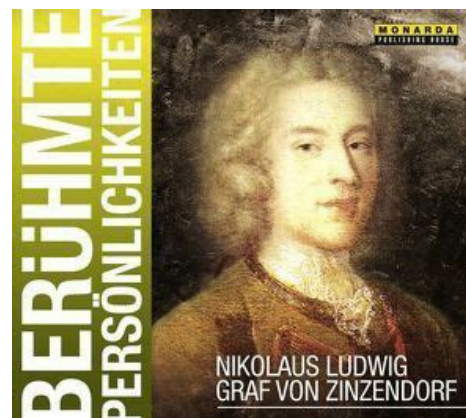
An example of "**one small candle lighting a thousand**" occurred in the early 1700s, with a rich young ruler ... continue reading American Minute here ... [continue reading American Minute here ...](#)

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Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf was born in 1700 into a noble German family, with his ancestor being **Maximillian I**, the **Holy Roman Emperor** from 1508 to 1519.



When **Nikolaus** was six weeks

old, his father died. His mother remarried, and at the age of four, he was sent to live with his **pietistic Lutheran grandmother, Henriette Catharina von Gersdorff.**



In 1719, at the age of **19 years old, Count Zinzendorf** went on his "Grand Tour" - a trip where young aristocrats made their first introductions to the royal courts of France, the Netherlands, and major German

kingdoms.

While on this tour, in the city of Dusseldorf, **Count Zinzendorf** visited a museum, where he viewed a painting by Domenico Feti depicting **Christ's suffering.**



The painting, titled "**Ecce Homo**" ("Behold the Man"), had a Latin caption underneath,

"Ego pro te haec passus sum
Tu vero quid fecisti pro me,"
which translated is:

**"This have I suffered for you;
now what will you do for me?"**

Young **Count Zinzendorf** was moved in a profound way.



Convicted in his heart by the Holy Spirit, **Count Zinzendorf** came to an intensely personal faith in Christ, an experience which

was part of a revival movement labeled "**Pietism.**"

In 1722, at the age of 22, **Count Zinzendorf** opened up his estate at Berthelsdorf, Saxony, for **persecuted Christians of Europe** who were displaced during the 30 Years War, to come and live together.



People arrived from Moravia, Bohemia (Czech



Republic) and other areas, and built a village on his estate called "**Herrnhut,**" which means "The Lord's Watchful Care."

The area of **Bohemia** had a **Reformation history** that can be traced back to **Jan Hus** in the 15th century.



The **religious refugees** that came to **Count Zinzendorf's estate** almost ended the endeavor before it really began, by bringing their doctrinal rivalries with them.

When they started disagreeing among themselves, the 27-year-old **Count Zinzendorf** began



a prayer meeting, August 13, 1727.

This meeting, called a "**prayer watch**," went on continuously 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with believers taking turns, **uninterrupted for over 100 years.**

Count Zinzendorf stated:

"I have one passion: it is Jesus, Jesus only."

More **Moravian missionaries** were sent out from **Herrnhut** in the **next 20 years** than all Christendom had **in the previous 200 years.**

The **Moravians** were the first to send **unordained lay people onto the mission field** rather than trained clergy.

Missionaries were also given **no financial support** but had to **earn their own living**. Most were **young men and women**.

Imagine today, if all the **woke youth**, instead of **rioting and tearing things down**, were using their energy to **share the love of Christ** and found **missions, orphanages, schools and hospitals around the world!**

They established **hundreds of renewal groups** and **Herrnhut-style settlements** around the world, emphasizing **personal prayer, worship, Bible study, confession of**



sins, communion, and mutual accountability.

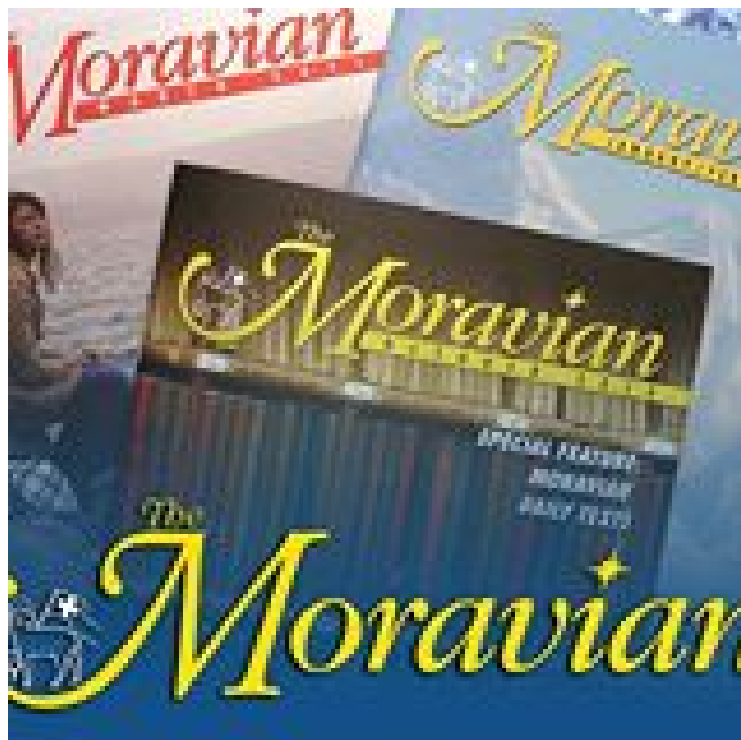
On May 3, 1728, **Moravians** began publishing a daily devotional called *Losungen*, or "**Daily Watchwords**,"

which went on to be translated into over 50 languages and be the **oldest and most widely read daily devotional in the world.**



Moravians were the **first large scale Protestant missionary movement:**

- to **Greenland, Canada, Alaska**, to the **Inuit of Labrador**,
- to the **West Indies, Costa Rica, Belize, Haiti**,
- to **American Indians**, such as **Cherokee, Lenape, Mohican, Algonquin, etc.**
- to the northern shores of the **Baltic**,
- to the slaves of **South Carolina**,
- to the **Miskito peoples of**

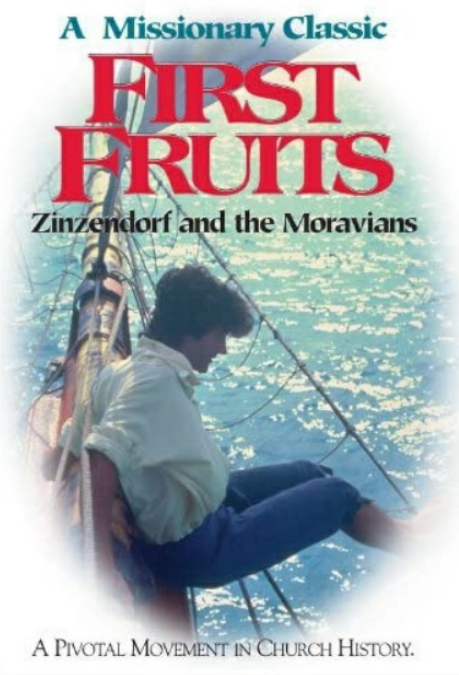


Nicaragua and Honduras,

- to slaves in **South America, Suriname, French Guyana, Peru,**



- to **Tranquebar and Nicobar Islands in the East Indies,**
- to the **Copts in Egypt,**
- to **Northern India and Nepal,**
- to **Kenya, Rwanda, Zanzibar, Uganda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Kivu, Katanga in DR Congo, and the west coast of South Africa.**



The story of the the **first Moravian missionaries** began in Germany with **Johann Leonhard Dober.**

A Christian film documenting this was titled "**First Fruits-- Zinzendorf and the Moravians,**" produced in 1982.

Dober was apprenticing to be a potter like his father, but at age 17, visited the community

at **Herrnhut** and converted.

On July 24, 1731, he heard **Zinzendorf's** plea for someone to reach the **slaves** on the **Caribbean sugar plantations**, recounting the testimony of **Anthony Ulrich**, a **former slave** from the **Danish island of St. Thomas** (which became part of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1917).

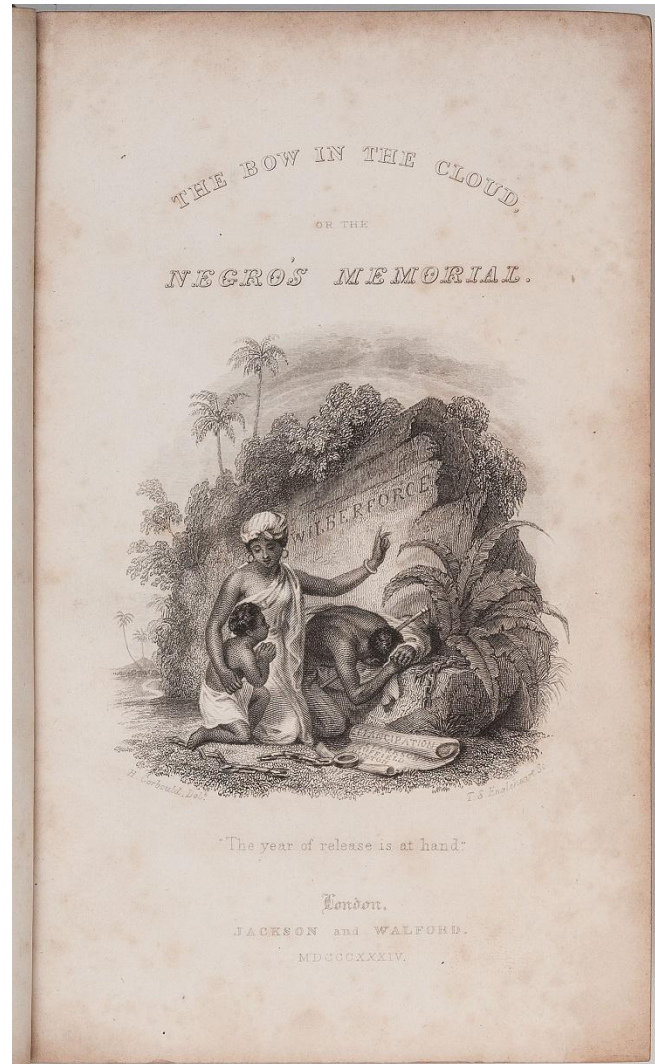
In 1834, Bonnie Bartonin wrote in the book *The Bow in the Cloud: or, The Negro's Memorial* (p. 5-6)

"In the course of a few weeks **the negro, Anthony**, himself arrived at **Hermhut**, and confirmed, at a public meeting ... that ... **his oppressed countrymen in St. Thomas** ... were ... worked by their masters,

that, unless **those who went to preach to them** would **consent to become slaves themselves**, and labour with the **negroes** in the **plantations**, they would have **little opportunity of communicating divine instruction** to them.

This intelligence did not in the smallest degree daunt **the devoted young men**; they were both ready, not only to be bound, **but to die for the Lord Jesus** ...

They were willing to **make any sacrifice** which might be required, **if they could win but one soul to Christ**, —

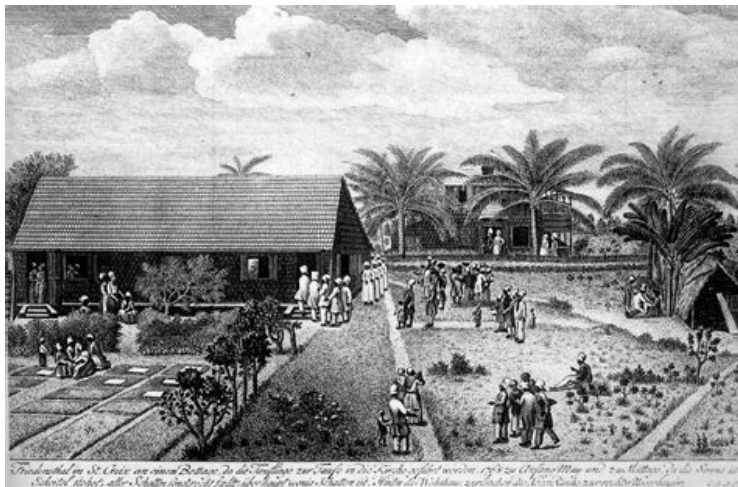


may, if they might but have the opportunity of **carrying the news of salvation to Anthony's sister**, — a poor despised female slave."

After a prayer meeting, August 20, 1732, **Zinzendorf** blessed **Johann Leonhard Dober** and carpenter **David Nitschman**, who then traveled to Danish capital of Copenhagen to get permission to go to **St. Thomas**.



Not having financial support of a church or missionary organization, the King's Chamberlain, Von Plesz, asked **how they expected to live while evangelizing the slaves**.



Nitschmann replied: "We shall **work as slaves among the slaves**."

Von Plesz said, "But that is impossible. It will not be allowed. No white man ever works as a slave."

Nitschmann replied, "I am a carpenter, and will ply my trade."

"But what will the potter do?"

"He will help me in my work."

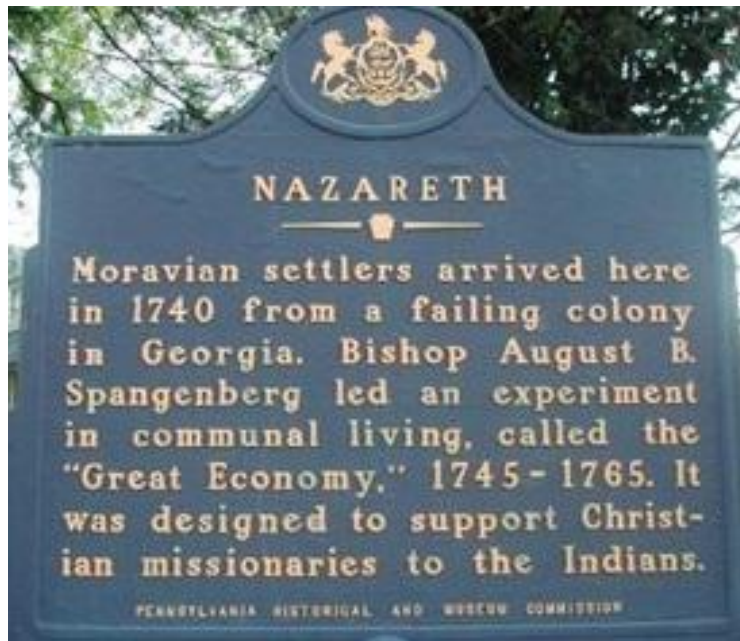
“If you go on like that,” the dismayed Chamberlain replied, “you will stand your ground the wide world over.”

They left **Copenhagen**, October 8, 1732, and two months later arrived in **St. Thomas** where they lived humbly and ministered to the slaves.



Over the next 50 years, more **Moravians** arrived and established churches on **St. Thomas, St. Croix, St. John's, Jamaica, Antigua, Barbados, and St. Kitts**, baptizing over **13,000 converts**.

Nitschmann undertook no less than **fifty sea voyages** and was particularly successful **evangelizing among slaves and native Americans**.



In 1740, he helped found a mission near **Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**.

On a trip back to Germany, **David Nitschmann** was elected a **Moravian bishop**.

In 1735, he sailed for **Georgia** on a **ship** carrying the passengers **John and Charles Wesley**.

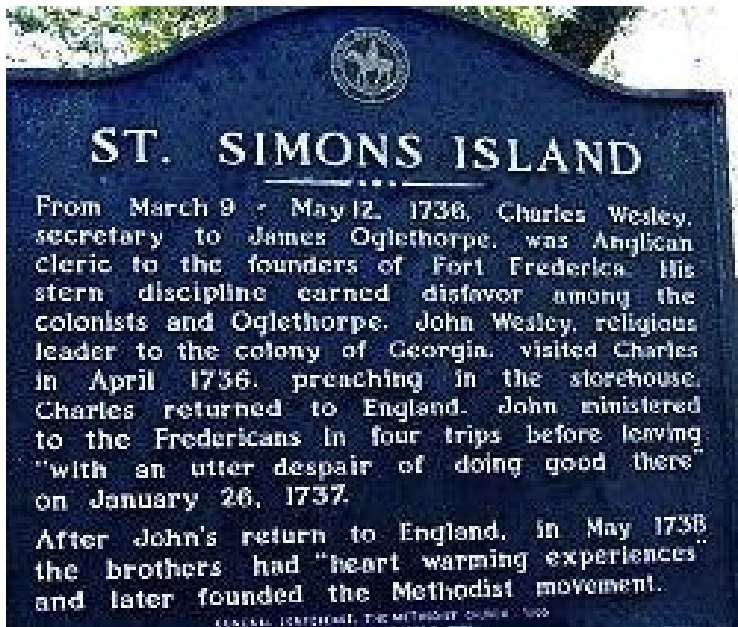


The **ship** was caught in a **terrible storm**.

While others panicked in fear, the **Moravians sang praise songs to the Lord**.

This made a profound impression on **the Wesleys**.

Charles Wesley was sent to be the **secretary of Georgia's founder James Oglethorpe**.



John Wesley was sent to be the colony's **Anglican minister**, at the settlement on **St. Simon Island**.

The **Wesley brothers** returned to **England** where, **feeling defeated**, they were invited to a **Moravian prayer meeting at Aldersgate**.

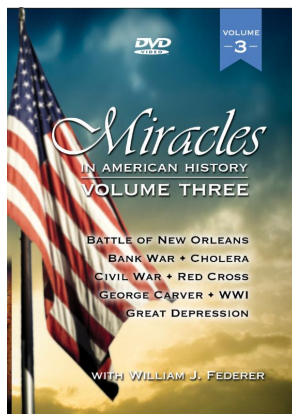
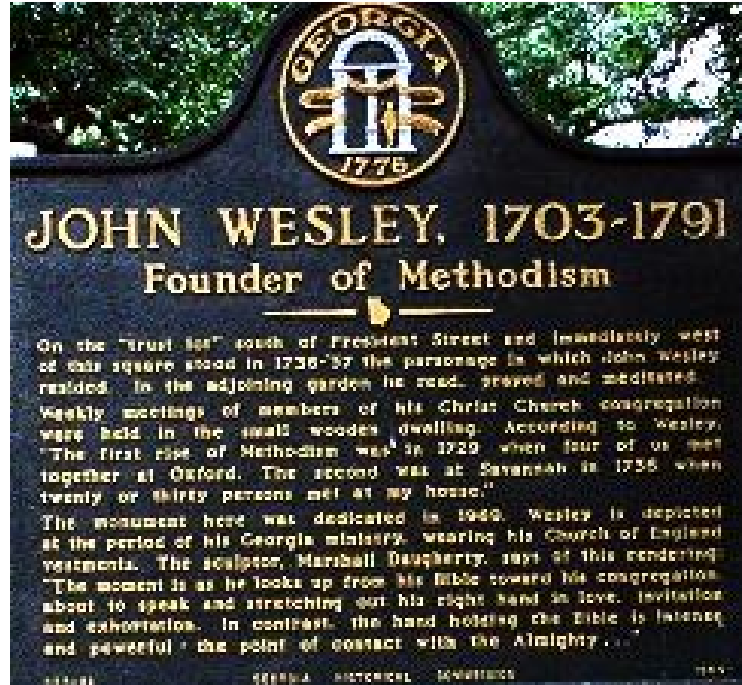


They were so touch by they **Holy Spirit** and their lives were forever changed.

In 1738, **John Wesley** visited **Herrnhut** to study with the **Moravians**. What he witnessed he described as "**the religion of the heart.**"

John returned to **England** where he began the **Methodist revival movement**.

Charles Wesley wrote over **6,000** sacred hymns.



[DVD Miracles in American History Volume 3](#)

Through the **Wesleys**, the **Moravian influence** was felt by **George Whitefield**, who helped lead the **Great Awakening Revival** in the



American colonies.



In 1741, **Count Zinzendorf** visited **America**, hoping to unify the various **German Protestants** churches in **Pennsylvania**.

On **Christmas Eve, 1741**, **Count Zinzendorf** founded **Bethlehem, Pennsylvania**.



Moravians settled an area in **North Carolina** which was named

Wachovia, after one of **Count Zinzendorf's** ancestral estates on the Danube River.

There his daughter, **Benigna**, organized a school which became **Moravian College**.



Count Zinzendorf traveled with the **German Indian agent** and interpreter **Conrad Weiser** into the wilderness to share his faith with **Iroquois Indian chieftains**, making **Zinzendorf** one of the

few European noblemen to meet with Indians in their villages.



Conrad Weiser's daughter, Ann Marie, married a young German minister, Henry Muhlenberg, who is considered the main founder of the Lutheran Church in America.

In 1742, **Henry Melchior Muhlenberg** met **Count Nicholas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf.**

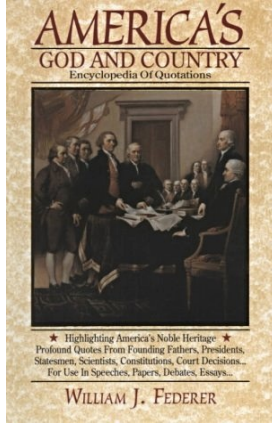


THE OLD TRAPPE CHURCH
BUILT BY HENRY MELCHIOR MUHLENBERG IN 1714

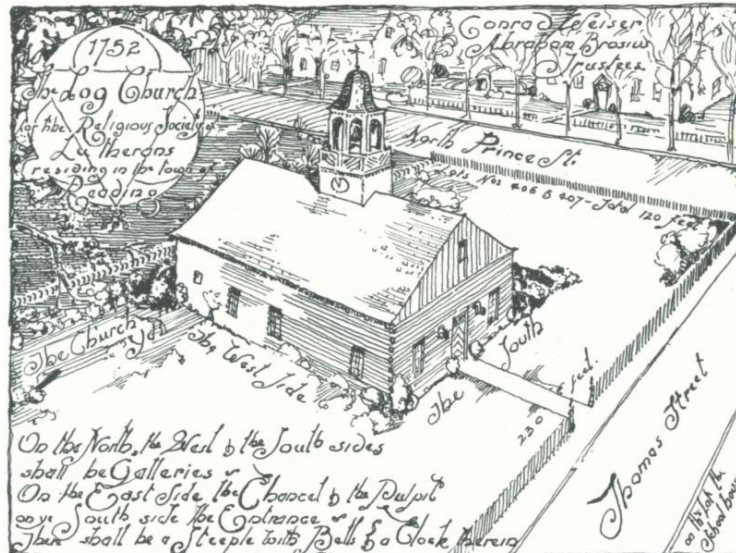
Later that year, on December 12, 1742, **Henry Muhlenberg**

became pastor of fifty German families at the **Old Trappe Church** in Pennsylvania.

[America's God and Country Encyclopedia of Quotations](#)



In 1751, **Henry Muhlenberg** received a land grant from the **sons of William Penn**, and on it founded **Trinity Lutheran Church** in Reading, Pennsylvania.



It was referred by **Lutherans** as their "**mother church**," as out of it were birthed numerous Lutheran Churches.



The **Trinity Lutheran Church** was used as a **hospital** during the **Revolutionary War** at the **Battle of Brandywine** in 1777.

Henry Muhlenberg was influenced by the **Pietist** movement within **Lutheranism** which stressed a

personal relationship with Christ in addition to adhering to orthodox doctrine.



Pietism also had a political consequence similar to "separation of church and state."



Whereas **Calvinist**

Puritans believed God had a will for everything **including government** and it was a Christian's duty to put God's Will in place;

Pietists, on the other hand, believed that when someone believed in Christ their life should change and they should **not participate in worldly distractions such as bars, theaters, and ... government.**

It was therefore a major step for **Henry Muhlenberg's son, John Peter Muhlenberg**, pastor of Emanuel Church in Woodstock, Virginia, to join **General George Washington's**



army as a **colonel**, with 300 members of his church forming the **8th Virginia Regiment**.

John Peter Muhlenberg was promoted to **Major-General** in the **Continental Army**, then elected to the **U.S. Congress** and **Senate**.



Henry Muhlenberg's other son, **Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg**, was pastor of a Lutheran congregation in New York.

Frederick Muhlenberg became active during the **Revolution** and afterwards was elected to the **U.S. Congress**, being



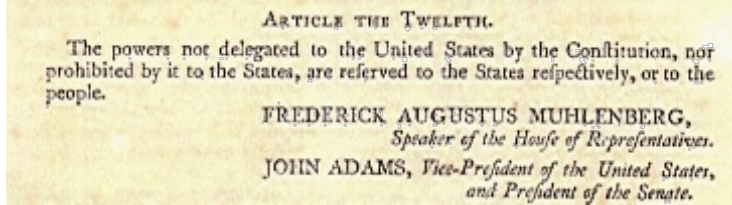
the first **Speaker**
of the **U.S. House**
of
Representatives.

Both **John Peter**
and **Frederick**
were members of
the **First Session**
of **U.S. Congress**
which passed
Twelve
Amendments
limiting the power
of the Federal
Government.



With both of them being **ordained pastors**, it is obvious they did not think the purpose of the First Amendment was to keep pastors out of politics.

Only **Ten of the**
Amendments
were ratified by



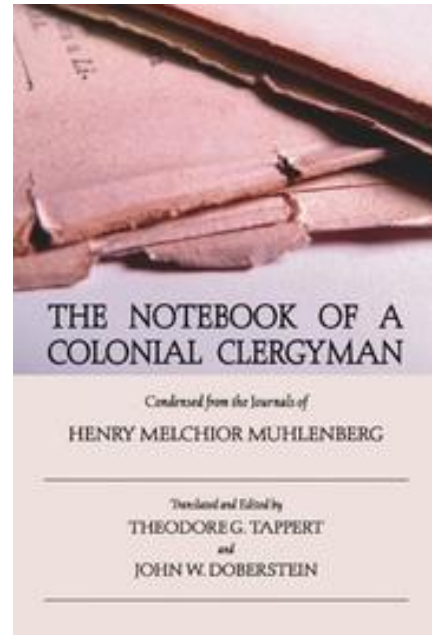
the States.

There are **two signatures** on the **Bill of Rights**:

Vice-President **John Adams** - who was President of the Senate; and Speaker of the House **Frederick Augustus Muhlenberg, Lutheran Pastor.**

Pastor Henry Muhlenberg wrote of General George Washington at Valley Forge in ***The Notebook of a Colonial Clergyman:***

"I heard a fine example today, namely that **His Excellency General Washington** rode around among his army yesterday and admonished each to **fear God, to put away wickedness ... and to practice Christian virtues ...**"



Rev. Muhlenberg continued:

"From all appearances **General Washington** does not belong to the so-called world of society, for **he respects God's Word, believes in the atonement through Christ, and bears himself in humility and gentleness.**



Therefore, the **Lord God** has also singularly, yea, **marvelously preserved him from harm** in the midst of **countless perils, ambushades, fatigues, etc.**, and has hitherto graciously **held him in his hand as a chosen vessel."**

The father of **Frederick** and **John Peter**, **Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg**, died **OCTOBER 7, 1787**.



"As one small candle may light a thousand," **Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf**, the **Moravian missionaries**, and the **pietist**

Lutherans, had a profound impact on the founding of **America**, as well as on missionary efforts around the world.

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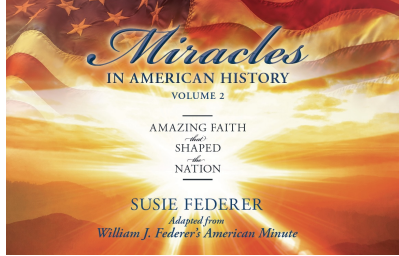
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