



Muhlenberg's Ministerium, Ben Franklin's Deism, and the Churches of the 21st Century: Reflections on the 250th Anniversary of the Oldest Lutheran Body in North America

F. LeRon Shults, Andrea Hollingsworth

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In 1748 six Lutheran pastors and laity from ten congregations gathered in Philadelphia under German missionary pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg to form the Ministerium of Pennsylvania — the first Lutheran church body in North America. These early American Lutherans stood at the crossroads of Lutheran orthodoxy, pietism, and rationalism as they faced the very new, very American challenge of forging a missional, confessional identity within their increasingly pluralistic and multi-religious society.

Now, more than 250 years later, this choice selection of essays, addresses, and other pieces celebrates the ongoing legacy of the Ministerium and will allow churches in the twenty-first century to glean new wisdom from a pioneering colonial church body.

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