Historical directory of the Reformed Church in America: 1628-1992

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Reformed Church in America, Protestant denomination founded in colonial times by settlers from the Netherlands and formerly known as the Dutch Reformed Church. The Reformed Church in Holland emerged in the 16th cent., after Calvinism gained influence in the northern provinces of the Netherlands. In 1571 a synod held at Emden laid the foundation for the Reformed Church. A liturgy was formulated along Reformation lines, and a modified Presbyterian form of polity was adopted. The Belgic Confession of Faith (1561) and the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) were made the basis of the new church; later, th Reformed Church
in America, church that developed from the Dutch settlements in New Netherlands (New York) in the 17th century. The Dutch Reformed Church was the first Reformed church of continental European background in North America. During the period of Dutch sovereignty over New Netherlands, it was the established church of the colony. When the English seized the colony in 1664, they gave assurances that the Dutch Reformed Church would be allowed freedom from English control and that it would be permitted to continue under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the classis (church governing body) of Amsterdam. Under this control the church grew slowly.