

SOUNDINGS IN  
ATLANTIC HISTORY

Latent Structures and  
Intellectual Currents,  
1500–1830

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EDITED BY

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HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, Massachusetts

London, England

2009

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## Dissenting Religious Communication Networks and European Migration, 1660–1710

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On August 5, 1677, a large crowd gathered at Geertruyd Dirck's house in Amsterdam to hear prominent English and Scottish Quaker missionaries George Fox, William Penn, Robert Barclay, and George Keith debate with Dutch clergy. The audience included people from different parts of the Netherlands and was made up of "presbyterians, socinians, baptists, seekers, etc."<sup>1</sup> As the religious leaders engaged in a vigorous, five-hour discussion, Benjamin Furly and Jan Klaus translated their Latin exchanges into Dutch and then conveyed audience questions into English for the missionaries.<sup>2</sup> Through their extensive knowledge of languages and their translating skills, Furly and Klaus linked several far-flung communication networks that were both transnational and ecumenical. They participated in conversations among Quakers in England, Scotland, and Ireland; Mennonites, Quakers, and members of the Reformed Church in the Netherlands; and Lutheran and Reformed Pietists as well as Anabaptists throughout the German and Swiss territories.<sup>3</sup> Although their religious beliefs differed considerably, those who joined the discussions were connected by common interests in reforming society through individual piety, appeals for relief from religious persecution, and efforts to lend economic aid.

This essay explores the forces linking Mennonite, Quaker, and Pietist communities and the effectiveness of the communication networks that emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> A "communication network" as used here is a set of links providing regular communi-

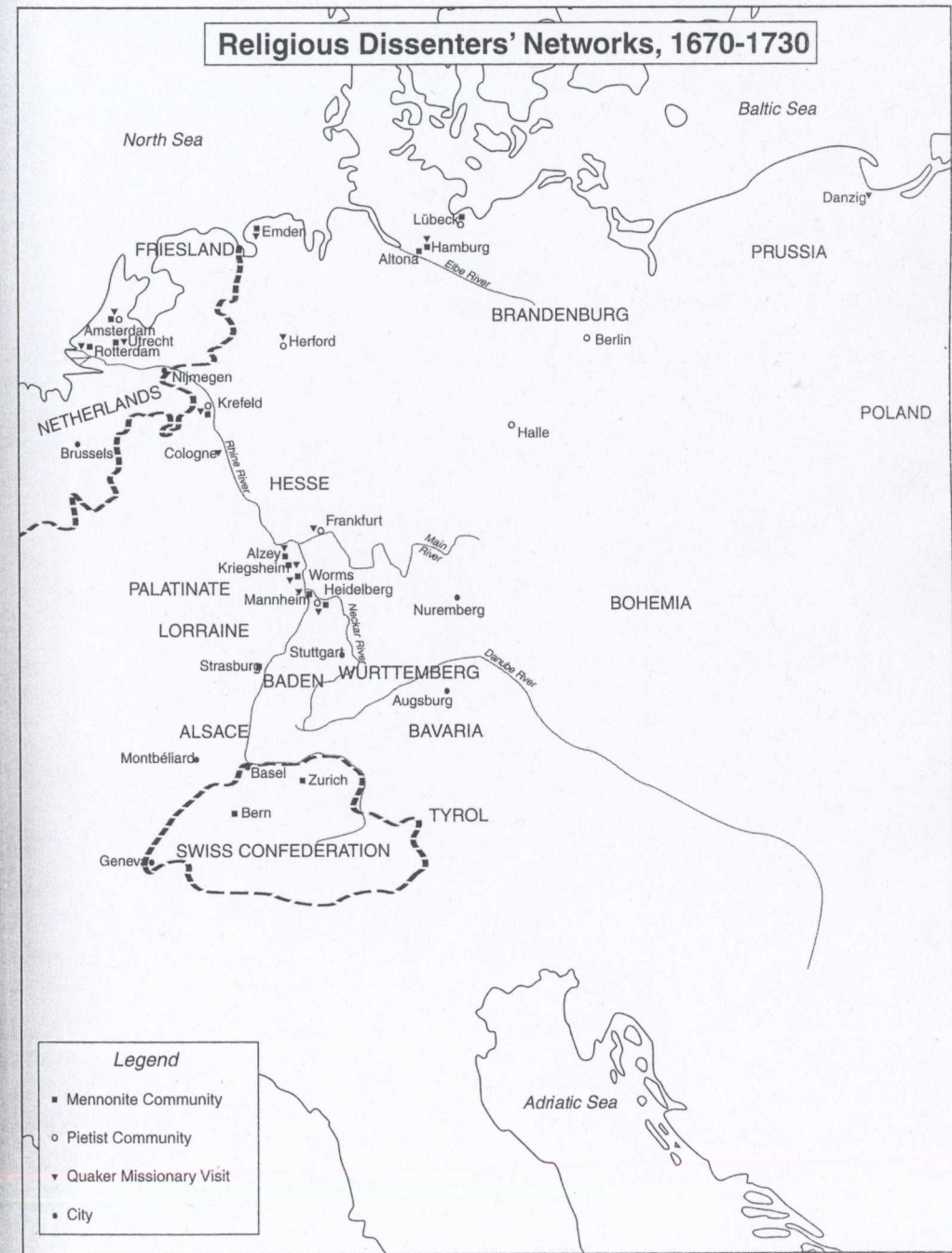
cation through various media (oral communication, manuscript letters, printed and published texts). Networks include the individuals sending information, one or more agents facilitating the flow of information, and the persons receiving it. Mennonite, Quaker, and Pietist networks eventually became semi-institutional. Dutch Mennonites established the Commission for Foreign Needs to coordinate relief efforts; Quakers formed Meetings for Sufferings to manage lobbying activities on behalf of imprisoned members; and Lutheran Pietists at Halle created regular correspondence networks linked to the pedagogical institutions of the *Franckesche Stiftung*. Communication networks also include those individuals who were linked to these more formal systems but who had correspondents of their own and thus created intersections between the different religious networks.

This essay examines why the dissenter networks evolved, the kinds of people who participated in them, and the ways in which individuals with different interests capitalized on them to recruit immigrants for various colonization schemes. Religious persecution was critical in shaping the multiple conversations that cut across political and cultural boundaries. Dutch Mennonites sent financial assistance to Palatine Anabaptists to aid fellow believers exiled from Switzerland. Similarly, English Quakers raised money for and lobbied on behalf of imprisoned Friends in the German states along the Rhine. Each group developed regular transnational communication channels in their attempts to fight religious discrimination or to spread their ideas about reforming society.<sup>5</sup> Each also sought contact with people from other religious communities sympathetic to their cause. Consequently, men and women from a variety of dissenting groups and from a broad social spectrum participated in the networks. English and Scottish Quaker missionaries sought converts among Mennonites and Pietists living in the Netherlands and Germany and as far east as Poland and Bohemia.<sup>6</sup> Protestant merchants, the "middling sort," the nobility, members of royal courts, and European heads of state participated in these ecumenical conversations about religious toleration and social reformation, and they sought correspondence with other like-minded people.

The correspondence networks of religious dissenters provided the means for legitimizing dissenters' positions with state authorities. Mennonites, for example, subscribed to their own confessions of faith and

developed institutional structures in the seventeenth century—processes of confessionalization occurring in official territorial churches—in order to defend against accusations of heresy and to argue that they were obedient citizens.<sup>7</sup> Quakers also organized in the face of intensifying persecution following the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Quakerism shifted from a radical reform movement to a religious sect with its own organizational structure and hierarchy to define membership and maintain discipline.<sup>8</sup> And while Pietists in Prussia became a part of the state-building efforts of the monarchy in the eighteenth century, radical and separatist Pietists (considered dissenters) also created confessional identities in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.<sup>9</sup> In each of these cases, regular channels of correspondence evolved in response to the group's minority status. They allowed dissenters to create confessional identities—processes similar to those occurring for continental Lutheran, Reformed, and Catholic churches—but outside the institutions of the state.

The religious communication networks of Protestant dissenters also became effective channels for information about migration and colonization. As Mennonites, Quakers, and Pietists recognized the possibilities that migration held for obtaining relief from discrimination, they capitalized on their connections to begin relocating people. European heads of state were interested in colonization for economic and geopolitical reasons. Looking for settlers to rebuild regions devastated by seventeenth-century wars, Protestant political leaders offered immigration incentives to dissenters forced out of Catholic and other Protestant lands. The English, Dutch, and Prussians welcomed Huguenot immigrants following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Dutch Mennonite leaders negotiated with heads of state in the Netherlands, Denmark, Prussia, and Hesse to resettle exiled Swiss Mennonites.<sup>11</sup> In addition, those who joined these discussions perceived the potential of overseas colonization for achieving their own goals and, thus, extended their connections across the Atlantic. British colonial proprietors and governors solicited religious dissenters from Britain and Europe in their efforts to people the American colonies. As people with a variety of interests—not all of them religious—funneled information through the networks, these channels became a dynamic force for



Map 6.1 Religious dissenters' networks in Europe, 1670-1730

migrations within Europe that also extended to the British American colonies.

This study provides the broader European context for Atlantic migrations by examining how Mennonite, Quaker, and Pietist connections disseminated information about continental as well as American destinations to potential immigrants, and it reveals why the number of immigrants from German-speaking areas rose significantly in the eighteenth century while the number from England declined.<sup>12</sup> By the end of the seventeenth century the transnational and ecumenical communication networks created by Mennonites, Quakers, and Pietists to deal with religious persecution and to spread their messages took on new roles as channels of information for a variety of colonial schemes in both Europe and America.

#### Mennonite Networks: Their Evolution and Structure

Mennonites provide the starting point for assessing why these networks evolved and how they were structured. By the mid-seventeenth century, Dutch Mennonites, Swiss Brethren, and Anabaptists living in the Palatinate and Alsace all traced their origins to the radical Reformation. In the early 1520s, several Swiss university students broke away from Zurich's Protestant reformers over several theological issues, one of which was baptism. The Swiss Brethren, as they called themselves, replaced infant baptism with adult or believers' baptism; consequently, they became known as Anabaptists (rebaptizers).<sup>13</sup> They also stressed individual piety, refused to swear oaths, and shunned military service, all of which political authorities viewed as insubordination. In addition, the Swiss Brethren's insistence on membership in their own congregations rather than in established churches challenged religious orthodoxy. By the late seventeenth century, Anabaptists throughout Europe were called "Mennonites" (after Menno Simons, a sixteenth-century leader who worked to unite north German Anabaptist congregations), "Anabaptists," or "Baptists" interchangeably.<sup>14</sup>

The Anabaptist movement spread rapidly throughout Europe. Persecuted by Catholics and Protestants alike, the dissenters moved frequently from one place to another, seeking refuge in Moravia, the Palatinate, Strasburg, and the Netherlands. Harassment and toleration continued in

cycles into the eighteenth century, depending on the religious affiliation of ruling governments throughout the region. In Switzerland, the government stopped executing Anabaptists in the 1570s but continued until the early eighteenth century to imprison them for life, banish them, or sell them as galley slaves.<sup>15</sup> In the Netherlands persecution ended in 1579 following independence from Spain, and Dutch Mennonites participated actively in the commercial life of the country throughout the seventeenth century. They became involved in shipbuilding, in the lumber, food, and textile industries, and in overseas trade. Within a century, Dutch Mennonites obtained a high degree of education and wealth. University-educated ministers led churches with the aid of lay leaders (elders and deacons) who were well-established physicians and merchants.<sup>16</sup>

Dutch Mennonites, Anabaptists in southern and central Germany, and the Swiss Brethren began corresponding regularly in the late 1630s, when Swiss officials passed measures banishing Anabaptists from Zurich. In response, Dutch Mennonites started lobbying the city's officials and sent money and supplies up the Rhine River to aid in resettling the exiles in the Palatinate and Alsace among small Anabaptist communities there.<sup>17</sup> Twenty years later Mennonites in Amsterdam and Krefeld assisted refugees from Jülich-Berg when the government systematically banished them.<sup>18</sup> In 1670, new measures sent another wave of Swiss Brethren into the Rhine Valley. The following year, Jacob Everling, an Anabaptist minister from Obersülzen in the Palatinate, sent a letter to the Mennonite congregation in Amsterdam describing the poor condition of the refugees. He reported that two hundred people had already arrived and, while they were making lodging arrangements for those, an additional sixty arrived, "among whom were many old people, also young children and people who were crippled or lame, traveling with a bundle on the back and children on the arms."<sup>19</sup> Once again, Dutch Mennonites collected money, food, clothing, and tools to distribute to the refugees. By January 1672, 640 Swiss Brethren had settled in communities on the east and west banks of the Rhine, where Anabaptist congregations were helping them establish new homes. The exiles had brought little property or money with them, and therefore posed a heavy financial burden on their Palatine benefactors. According to one report from Kriegsheim in the Palatinate, the refugees' assets totaled

only 1,654 Reichstaler and a few household goods. Consequently, they relied heavily on the financial assistance of the Dutch Mennonites.<sup>20</sup>

The networks that evolved in response to persecution were headed by a handful of leaders who lobbied governments and solicited information, goods, and money. In the Netherlands, Hans Vlamingh, a wealthy merchant from Amsterdam and a deacon in "the Sun" congregation, began early efforts to assist Swiss exiles.<sup>21</sup> Throughout the 1660s he corresponded with a series of Swiss officials, businessmen, and intellectuals to urge toleration on behalf of fellow believers in Zurich and Bern. He also recruited other leading Protestants to argue that even though they, as Reformed theologians, disagreed with Mennonite beliefs, it was wrong to coerce people to change their religious views.<sup>22</sup> In addition, he kept careful accounts of the money collected and expended while lobbying on behalf of Swiss and other Mennonite refugees.<sup>23</sup>

While Vlamingh lobbied intellectuals and religious leaders, other church and lay leaders from congregations in Amsterdam solicited money on behalf of religious refugees. On January 20, 1672, two congregations in Amsterdam collected all kinds of coins as well as a gold chain, a gold ring with a diamond, and several silver medals. Those charged with keeping the accounts noted that they had already remitted more than 700 Reichstaler to assist the Swiss Brethren. They also requested contributions from other congregations nearby.<sup>24</sup> By 1689, when Palatine Mennonites sent news of the French plundering their homes, Amsterdam lay leaders had expanded their efforts. In 1690 they solicited money from congregations in more than thirty locations scattered throughout Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland.<sup>25</sup>

A committee with representatives from churches throughout the Netherlands met periodically in Amsterdam to determine who needed assistance and to carry news home to their congregations.<sup>26</sup> Coordinating information and keeping careful accounts of the money collected and expended, the group sent men traveling up the Rhine to deliver money and to assess the needs of the refugees. Committee members gave careful instructions about whom to contact, the kinds of information to gather, and how to distribute funds. One group sent to the Palatinate in 1672 went with merchants traveling to the Frankfurt Fair and used their connections to draw bills of exchange on merchants there.<sup>27</sup> After their arrival, the traveling committee members drafted detailed ac-

counts of how they spent the contributions. They noted, for example, that they delivered one mattress and pillow, sheets, cloth for men's clothing, money to have clothes made, women's shoes and socks, and household equipment to Peter Fredrick, aged 66, and his wife, the same age, at Eychtersheim. Commissioners also noted with care the age and occupations of the refugees and of those who were considering moving to the Netherlands.<sup>28</sup>

While Dutch urban areas functioned as collection points, several cities and towns along the Rhine became important distribution and communication centers. In the Palatinate, congregations in Kriegsheim and Mannheim provided shelter for refugees fleeing Switzerland. In 1671, Jacob Everling reported to Amsterdam that families in Obersülzen had housed sixty of the exiles, many of whom were very old or very young. Fifty others had gone to Mannheim. The following year a church council met at Kriegsheim to determine how to assist the influx of recent arrivals.<sup>29</sup> Valentin Huetwohl, a minister in Kriegsheim, and Georg Liechti, the leader of the Swiss refugees, spent four days traveling from village to village constructing a census of the seventy-six Swiss families scattered among the Palatine Mennonites. Farther down the Rhine, Mennonites in Krefeld also contributed money and supplies to aid the cause and passed on information about refugees in the Palatinate to Dutch Mennonites.<sup>30</sup>

In each place, those who joined the efforts to help religious refugees had been earlier targets of religious discrimination. Mennonites living in the Palatinate and along the Rhine enjoyed limited toleration, but their situation always remained precarious. Karl Ludwig, Elector Palatine (1649–1680), granted Mennonites, Hutterites, Sabbatarians, Huguenots, and Jews the right to worship privately as part of his recruitment effort to rebuild following the Thirty Years' War.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, local and religious authorities frequently disregarded official policy. In 1660, Mennonites in Kriegsheim complained to Karl Ludwig that their neighbors kept them from purchasing property because of their religious identity.<sup>32</sup> In 1680 they sought his aid again because of misunderstandings about their worship services. The local inspector maintained that only twenty people could attend meetings for worship, whereas they understood that their congregations could include all members of twenty families.<sup>33</sup> Farther down the Rhine, Mennonites in Gladbach had moved to Krefeld

in search of religious toleration in 1654.<sup>34</sup> Forty years later, when officials imprisoned thirty men, women, and children from the Mennonite congregation in the neighboring town of Rheydt, some of those former refugees collected 8,000 Reichstaler in bail money to purchase the prisoners' release.<sup>35</sup> For European Mennonites, responses to religious discrimination created shared identities that crossed political, cultural, and linguistic boundaries from the Netherlands to Switzerland.

Religious persecution, therefore, was a key factor in the emergence of Mennonite communication networks beginning in the 1630s. Although Dutch, German, and Swiss Mennonite clergy had exchanged letters before in their attempts to find common religious ground, they began corresponding regularly in response to the physical and material needs resulting from intolerance. Church leaders in different cities collected information about fellow believers who were imprisoned, threatened with death, or exiled for their religious views. They also solicited aid from congregants in the Netherlands and northern Germany and funneled money and household goods to those in need. Several key cities in the Netherlands, along the Rhine, and in Switzerland functioned as collection and distribution centers, while committees traveled between communities with Mennonite congregations. They worked with well-connected government officials to alleviate persecution and to negotiate terms of exile and resettlement. For European Mennonites, participation in these mutual aid networks and migration between congregations solidified the sense of belonging to a larger transnational religious community.

### Quaker Networks: Their Evolution and Structure

Like the Mennonites, early Quakers developed regular channels of communication in their efforts to aid those being imprisoned and persecuted because of their religious beliefs. Originating in northwest England in the wake of the English Civil War, the Quaker movement sought to reform the world by preaching a message that urged individuals to seek the "light within."<sup>36</sup> Members believed that the light of God, directed at individual consciences, would expose people's sinful natures and convince them of their complete dependence on God.<sup>37</sup> Quakers first referred to themselves as "children of the light" and called one another

"friends" as early as 1652. They considered themselves to be members of the gathered Christian church rather than a separate sect. George Fox, an early Quaker leader, traveled throughout northern England in the early 1650s spreading his message. His missionary zeal also characterized other early converts, who felt an overwhelming need to "publish the truth." Friends traveled in pairs of men or women, speaking to anyone who would listen. They rapidly fanned out from northwest England to all parts of the country.<sup>38</sup> Within a few years, Quakerism spread into Ireland, Scotland, Europe, the West Indies, and the American mainland colonies. By 1660, the total number of Friends had reached approximately forty thousand.<sup>39</sup>

The early Quakers' style of "speaking the truth" threatened established churches and the social order. Friends claimed to receive messages directly from God, spoke openly against the hypocrisy and failures of the clergy, and refused to demonstrate accepted forms of deference (by using the informal "thee" and "thou" and failing to remove their hats to their social superiors). Because of their refusal to swear oaths, attend established churches, and pay tithes, Quakers were persecuted by secular and religious officials alike. They were hanged, whipped, imprisoned, fined, exiled, and often had their property seized or destroyed.<sup>40</sup> In the social and political upheaval that characterized England in the 1650s, the persecution of Quakers was uneven and depended on local circumstances. However, the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and the establishment of the Church of England marked the beginning of a period of systematic persecution that lasted twenty years. The Clarendon codes, a series of acts passed by an Anglican-dominated Parliament and aimed at curtailing the rights of all non-Anglicans, established the legal basis for religious persecution aimed at all dissenting groups. They displaced clergy who would not use the Book of Common Prayer weekly, excluded non-Anglicans from city councils, and prohibited meetings for worship outside the Church of England. As a result, 8,600 Quakers were imprisoned during the first five years of Charles II's reign.<sup>41</sup>

Quaker correspondence networks evolved rapidly in response to both persecution and missionary efforts. Traveling ministers began exchanging letters to report their movements and their success. In the earliest years, Swarthmore Hall, the Lancashire home of Margaret Fell—one of Fox's earliest converts and later his wife—functioned as a communica-

tion center as Friends sent constant news to Fell.<sup>42</sup> Between June 1652 and December 1660, more than 563 personal letters from 148 different writers arrived at Fell's home.<sup>43</sup> Correspondents exhorted one another, reported on the progress of their missionary efforts, passed on news of fellow Quakers in other places, and described their "sufferings." William Ames, for example, wrote to Fell from Utrecht in 1656 about his trip to Holland. He reported on the meetings he had held en route with Baptists at Harwich when his ship was forced to wait out bad weather. He also described how, some time after his arrival in Amsterdam, he was called before the magistrates, who apparently had nothing to "allege against us, only we would not put off our hats." Ames claimed that "the Lord made me as a brasen wall against them. They were a light company of men, but in the power of the Lord, their folly, in wisdom and moderation, was witnessed against, through which they were confounded." The magistrates, after several interrogations and Ames's refusal to leave the city, imprisoned the traveling minister and his companion. Several days later, after repeated questioning failed to convince the Friends to leave, officials escorted them out of the city and threatened severe punishment if they returned. From there Ames went to Rotterdam, where he "had two pretty meetings, and Friends were reached, and those who had run out and lost themselves in measure, were brought to see their loss and the cause of it, it being shewn them."<sup>44</sup> Reports like Ames's allowed Quaker leaders to stay in regular contact as they traveled to spread their message. They also helped to foster a cohesive group identity among the fledgling Quaker communities.<sup>45</sup>

A second center of communication, in addition to Swarthmore Hall, developed by 1675 after Quakers formed the London Meeting for Sufferings. By this time the Quakers had already established a system of weekly and monthly meetings for worship and for business that grew out of their response to persecution. What began as meetings of ministers to organize missionary efforts became regularized, as Friends responded to the physical needs of families whose members were in prison and worked to obtain freedom for those who were incarcerated.<sup>46</sup> The London Meeting for Sufferings was organized specifically to combat the legal codes that enforced persecution. It consisted of twelve London Friends who met weekly and established regular correspondence

between the local meetings and London. The Meeting for Sufferings requested local monthly meetings to send representatives to London regularly and to submit reports of "sufferings" or persecution and discrimination in their communities. By spring 1677, they had compiled and submitted to Parliament a "Book of Sufferings" with evidence of persecution.<sup>47</sup> Through the London Meeting for Sufferings, Quakers lobbied the English courts and Parliament on behalf of the thousands of Friends who were imprisoned during the 1670s and 1680s.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to fighting against legal discrimination in the courts, Quakers also petitioned heads of state to establish official policies of toleration. William Penn, an English gentleman of means with a legal education and strong connections to the Stuart court, had become a Quaker by 1667. In events characteristic of Quaker ministers' experiences, Penn was arrested in Ireland in 1667, incarcerated in the Tower of London for blasphemy in 1668 and 1669, arrested again for preaching in 1670, and imprisoned in Newgate in 1671.<sup>49</sup> Penn's first appeals were on his own behalf, but he soon began to use his social and political connections to call for policies of toleration. In 1670, he published *A Great Case of Liberty of Conscience*, in which he made a political and philosophical argument for toleration. He and other Friends repeatedly petitioned the king and his ministry to change their religious policies.<sup>50</sup>

In Europe, English and Dutch Quakers also lobbied for religious toleration on behalf of recent converts suffering from persecution. In Kriegsheim, Friends were fined and imprisoned as early as 1658 for refusing to perform military service or pay war taxes. Two years later, after protesting an increase in the fees required to secure relief from military duty, seven men in the very small Quaker community were arrested.<sup>51</sup> Several English Quaker women who preached publicly also created problems for the community of Friends there when they visited Kriegsheim in 1678, for Palatine women did not preach in public or play a leadership role in their churches. Peter Hendricks, a Quaker button maker in Amsterdam, came to the defense of the Palatine Quaker congregation by engaging in a lively exchange of pamphlets with the Reformed pastor from a neighboring village.<sup>52</sup> English Friends also repeatedly petitioned the Elector Palatine to uphold his policies of religious toleration and to protect the fledgling congregation from local clergy,

magistrates, and other citizens. In addition, they used their friendship with the Elector's sister Elizabeth, the granddaughter of James I, to try to influence his position.<sup>53</sup>

Farther down the Rhine, Quakers in Krefeld experienced similar episodes of discrimination beginning in 1679. Hendricks, in Amsterdam, reported to English Friends that "Concerning ye Crevelt friends, they have been banished and sent away twice with a threatening from ye deputie of Crevelt the last time if they come in againe, they should be whipt and burnt on their backs, sweareing by his soules salvation he should do it." In spite of threats, however, they had returned and "have been their again peacably a prettie while, about 6 or 7 weekes." One man "was beaten greivously of late, by 2 of his neighbors, when he was passing by them."<sup>54</sup> As they had done for the Kriegsheim Quakers, English and Dutch leaders wrote petitions to government officials on behalf of the Krefeld Friends. Furly, Hendricks, and Arent Sonnemans wrote from Holland to local officials, while Penn wrote to the Prince of Orange requesting toleration for fellow European Friends.<sup>55</sup>

Thus, in the process of responding to religious persecution, Quakers, like the Mennonites, established the means for exchanging information. They created regular channels of communication and mobilized resources for influencing governments to change their policies. Two correspondence centers or hubs—Swarthmore Hall and London—emerged by the end of the seventeenth century. In Europe, Quakers in Amsterdam linked English Friends to fledgling meetings on the Continent. To facilitate the exchange of information and to coordinate lobbying efforts, Quakers created a system of regular meetings that reported persecution and the needs of members. Like those of the Mennonites, the webs of relationships they built reached across political, cultural, and linguistic boundaries; they helped to shape transnational identities based on common religious experience.

#### Network Participants: Missionary Work and Ecumenical Intersections

Even as they provided a way of sharing information and aid, the religious networks of the Friends functioned as avenues for their missionary efforts. As Quakers spread their message, they sought people

who they believed were receptive to their interpretation of Christianity. Above all, they wanted to meet with others who shared their emphasis on a personal, unmediated relationship with God and a desire for pious living. Quakers' attempts to reach out to anyone who was willing to consider their message or who was open to similar religious practice expanded their communication channels not only across political and cultural divides, but also across confessional, social, and gender boundaries. By the end of the seventeenth century, participants in these religious networks were men and women from different social classes who came from a wide variety of religious backgrounds.

Quaker missionaries sought to convert people from religious backgrounds with whom they shared common ground. In England, Scotland, and Ireland, they sent traveling ministers to convert Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and a variety of sectarians.<sup>56</sup> Foremost among the groups that Quakers targeted in Europe were Mennonites. They recognized similarities in practice and belief in the Mennonite refusal to swear oaths and in their emphasis on personal religious experience, and they hoped to convert them to Quakerism. Missionary work in the Netherlands began as early as 1655, when "the word of ye lord came to John Stubbs . . . to go to Holland, & was shortly after revealed to William Caton . . . to go along with him."<sup>57</sup> Between then and 1661, Caton and William Ames worked feverishly to convert Mennonites in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Flushing, Middleburg, and Utrecht.<sup>58</sup> In 1658 Ames traveled even farther to Friesland, Hamburg, the Palatinate, Bohemia, Brandenburg, Danzig, and Poland. The same year and again in 1661, he went as far up the Rhine as Kriegsheim, where he made converts among the Mennonite congregation before meeting with the Elector Palatine in Heidelberg. As a result of their missionary efforts, by the mid-1660s traveling Friends established meetings with Mennonite converts in Amsterdam, Emden, Hamburg, Danzig, Friedrichstadt, and Kriegsheim.<sup>59</sup>

Quakers also worked to convert Labadists, followers of Jean Labadie who lived in Middleburg from 1666 until 1669, when discrimination forced them to move.<sup>60</sup> Like Friends, Labadists stressed the importance of regeneration through the Holy Spirit and practicing godly living. Princess Elizabeth of the Palatinate had become acquainted with two of Labadie's followers while she was living in the Netherlands. When they were banished, she invited them to Herford, where she took them under



her protection. In 1671, Penn, Furly, and Thomas Rudyard traveled there to visit the Labadists.<sup>61</sup> In 1676 Furly traveled a second time on a missionary trip to Herford.<sup>62</sup> The following year, when he went with Penn and George Keith on a month-long tour of western Germany and eastern Holland, the missionaries visited their friends at Herford twice.<sup>63</sup> Although their missionary efforts failed to produce converts, the Friends began a correspondence with Anna Maria von Schurmann and the Dutch countess Anna Maria van Hoorn, two of the Labadists, which continued throughout the 1670s. They also exchanged letters regularly with Princess Elizabeth.<sup>64</sup>

The princess and the Labadists at Herford connected the Quakers to another set of correspondents to whom they soon sent missionaries. These aristocratic women participated in a larger network of European intellectuals seeking to reform society through individual piety and devotion. One of their correspondents was Philip Jacob Spener, an early German Pietist leader who was in Frankfurt in the 1670s.<sup>65</sup> Spener and his friend Johann Jakob Schütz began weekly meetings in their homes to read and discuss devotional literature. The focus of their *collegium* (devotional group) was to promote personal piety. The Frankfurt Pietists were deeply influenced by Labadie's ideas of a philadelphian community in which members demonstrated an experience of rebirth and lived in close fellowship with one another. Schütz, in particular, corresponded with von Schurmann. By the late 1670s, these philadelphian ideas led to a split between Spener and Schütz, and the latter formed a group that became known as the Saalhof Pietists.<sup>66</sup> On their 1677 missionary journey, Penn, Keith, and Furly met with the Frankfurt Pietists. Penn reported that "they rec'd us with gladness of heart, & embraced our Testimony with a broken & reverent spirit; thanking god for our Coming amongst them, & praying that he would prosper this work in our hands."<sup>67</sup> Among this group were Johanna Eleonora von Merlau, Juliane Baur van Eysseneck, Johann Wilhelm Petersen, and Jacob Vanderwalle, a merchant with whom the missionaries lodged. They corresponded with others throughout Europe who were seeking further religious reform.<sup>68</sup>

In each case, Quakers linked intersecting correspondence networks and began conversations with people interested in reforming the Protestant church and society through religious practice. Those who joined

their networks came from a wide array of Protestant religious perspectives. Spener, for example, worked to bring about religious reform within the established Lutheran church, but he corresponded with religious seekers who lived throughout Europe and held religious views that differed significantly from his own.<sup>69</sup> Schütz exchanged letters with Reformed and Lutheran Pietists throughout Germany; intellectuals such as Christian Knorr von Rosenroth and Franziscus Mercurius van Helmont, who explored the more mystical elements of the Cabala; and separatists like von Schurmann, von Merlau, and Petersen, who had become leaders among the German philadelphians by the first decade of the eighteenth century.<sup>70</sup> Penn, Furly, Barclay, and other leading Quakers joined these conversations, which focused on personal piety and attempts to unify the Protestant church through spiritual practice.<sup>71</sup> Through their missionary work, Quakers fashioned a kaleidoscope of ecumenical connections with men and women from a variety of social backgrounds. They visited and corresponded with one another in their attempts to find common ground. In the process, they tapped into other networks that provided them with current information on the status of others working to reform the Christian church.

### The Uses of Networks: Quakers and Pietists

The communication networks and lobbying mechanisms the Quakers established in the interests of spreading the gospel and achieving religious toleration gained a new purpose when Friends became involved in American colonization projects. In 1674, in an effort to solve a London merchant's credit problems, a group of Quaker investors purchased shares of West Jersey on the Delaware River, where they decided to promote a Quaker colony. William Penn, one of the investors, was intimately involved in these colonizing efforts between 1676 and 1681. During those same years, he was traveling in Europe on his missionary journey and petitioning various heads of state there and in Britain for religious toleration.<sup>72</sup> He clearly was thinking about colonization projects and Quaker settlements when he wrote to the Elector Palatine on August 24, 1677, that, had he been able to visit him, Penn would have conversed with him about "what encouragmt a Colony of virtuous and industrious familys might hope to receive from thee, in case they should

transplant themselves into this country."<sup>73</sup> Three years later Penn submitted a proposal to the English Privy Council for a colony on the west side of the Delaware River and on March 4, 1681, he received a charter for Pennsylvania. Historians have debated the extent to which Penn intended his colony to be a religious haven for persecuted Quakers or an economic enterprise.<sup>74</sup> Penn likely saw no contradiction between religious and commercial purposes; he wrote that the colony was meant for "the service of God first, the honor and advantage of the king, with our own profit."<sup>75</sup>

Regardless of which purpose dominated Pennsylvania's founding, Penn clearly capitalized on his Quaker connections and the economic resources they offered to find settlers for his province. His original plan for the colony relied on investors whom he solicited largely from among Britain's wealthy Quaker merchants. To promote his enterprise and recruit immigrants, he depended on well-placed Friends with their own commercial networks to act as agents. In London, James Claypoole, a Quaker merchant with interests in the West Indies and the Baltic, sought investors for the proprietor. In Scotland Penn relied on Barclay, his missionary companion and a leading minister among Friends with powerful political connections, to aid his endeavors. And in Rotterdam, Furly acted as an agent, recruiting European investors in the land, translating promotional pamphlets, and arranging transportation for immigrants to the colony.<sup>76</sup>

Furly's activities as Penn's agent illustrate the way the Quaker colonizer relied on the ecumenical and transnational European networks in which he participated. They also demonstrate Furly's role as an information broker. His first task as Penn's agent was to translate and distribute promotional literature in the Netherlands, the German states, and France. At least fifty-eight broadsides, books, and pamphlets were published in English, Dutch, German, and French to promote Pennsylvania.<sup>77</sup> When Penn wrote the pamphlet *Some account of the Province of Pennsylvania in America; Lately Granted under the Great Seal of England to William Penn, &c*, Furly translated it into Dutch and German and had it printed in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. To strengthen the appeal of the pamphlet for his continental audience, he appended Penn's 1674 letter to the mayor and council of Emden, in which Penn had lobbied against the persecution of Quakers there. By adding Penn's let-

ter, Furly signaled the founder's concern with religious toleration—a concern Penn did not address explicitly in his pamphlet.<sup>78</sup> Furly also added a glossary to the German edition to define some of the terms he left untranslated, thereby mediating English legal culture for potential German-speaking immigrants.<sup>79</sup> He then distributed the literature to Quaker and Mennonite communities along the Rhine, in northern Germany, and in the Netherlands, some of which he had visited on his earlier missionary journeys.<sup>80</sup>

Furly also recruited investors in Penn's American land; between 1681 and 1700, he sold almost 50,000 acres in Pennsylvania.<sup>81</sup> Among the first European purchasers were thirteen families from Krefeld, mostly Quakers.<sup>82</sup> Furly sold them land as individuals but promised to have it surveyed in adjoining lots so that they could establish their own settlement within the colony.<sup>83</sup> He also sent private letters to the Saalhof Pietists he had visited in Frankfurt just four years earlier, encouraging them to migrate to Pennsylvania.<sup>84</sup> As a result of his efforts, the Frankfurt Company purchased 15,000 acres of Penn's land from Furly. The company's investors included Van de Walle, Petersen, von Merlau, and Schütz, all Pietists whom Furly had met in 1677.<sup>85</sup> In late spring 1683, Francis Daniel Pastorius, acting as the agent for the company, set out for Pennsylvania. On his way, he stopped at Kriegsheim, where he visited with Furly's friends among the Quakers and Mennonites there, and in Krefeld, where he met the investors to whom Furly had sold Pennsylvania land. These early European contacts proved useful after Pastorius arrived in the colony. When it became clear that the other Frankfurt investors were not joining him, Pastorius worked with the immigrants Furly had recruited from Krefeld and later arrivals from Kriegsheim to establish Germantown, Pennsylvania.<sup>86</sup>

Furly continued to act as a broker of information for potential immigrants by passing news about the colony to his European correspondents. Having gained firsthand experience in the voyage and settlement process, Pastorius wrote letters and reports to Furly, who then funneled them, along with manuscript and print copies of Penn's promotional literature, to his own contacts.<sup>87</sup> One of Furly's correspondents was Jaspas Balthasar Könneken, a Pietist bookseller in Lübeck who had hoped to migrate to the colony but decided against it because of his age. Könneken and his close associate, Balthasar Jawert (also an investor in

the Frankfurt Company), in turn disseminated the manuscripts through their own communication channels.<sup>88</sup> In this way, Furly spread personalized, eyewitness accounts of the new colony to an audience with their own interests and connections scattered throughout Europe.

Another set of immigrants Furly recruited through his religious networks were linked to Johann Jakob Zimmerman. Zimmerman was a Lutheran Pietist minister from Württemberg who was dismissed from his position for his millennial views. In Germany, he organized a "Chapter of Perfection," a group of intellectuals, mostly Lutheran Pietists, who believed that the establishment of the Kingdom of God was imminent. After his expulsion from Württemberg in 1685, Zimmerman lived for a brief period with Schütz, by that time an investor in the Frankfurt Company and Furly's correspondent.<sup>89</sup> In 1693 Zimmerman gathered a small group of forty immigrants in Rotterdam en route to Pennsylvania, but he died before they set sail. Nevertheless, Furly assisted the remainder of the immigrants on their journey to the colony under their new leader, Johannes Kelpius.<sup>90</sup> Their settlement in Pennsylvania, located close to Germantown, became known as "the Society of the Woman in the Wilderness" because of their particular religious views. The group mixed mysticism, scientific experimentation, and monasticism in their attempts to live their lives in preparation for Christ's return. By the time Kelpius died in 1708, most of the group had disbanded or joined other churches, but several members maintained connections to their European correspondents.<sup>91</sup>

In 1699, Daniel Falckner and Heinrich Bernard Köster, two members of Zimmerman's group who had left the "Society," returned to Europe to collect money for a new church, recruit immigrants, and solicit a pastor for the Lutherans in Pennsylvania.<sup>92</sup> While there, Falckner visited August Hermann Francke, the renowned Lutheran Pietist who had recently established the orphanage and educational foundations at Halle that would become the center of eighteenth-century German Pietism. The two men had corresponded before Falckner left for Pennsylvania.<sup>93</sup> Among the topics Falckner and Francke discussed was the potential for establishing an American Pietist colony. Francke, committed to expanding the reach of Lutheran Pietism, was interested, and posed a series of 103 practical questions about the people and conditions for colonization in Pennsylvania, which Falckner answered exhaustively in *Curieuse*

*Nachricht von Pensylvania . . .* (1702).<sup>94</sup> Although neither man succeeded in founding a Pietist colony in Penn's province, Falckner's pamphlet helped to spread practical information about the British colonies in Europe at a time (1709–1710) when thousands of German-speaking immigrants left their homes in search of better conditions. Many of those immigrants moved to New York and a few eventually made it to Pennsylvania.<sup>95</sup>

All of Falckner's activities—the return trip to Europe to recruit immigrants and the comprehensive and detailed *Curieuse Nachricht*—reflect the importance of Penn's transnational religious networks, through which he and Furly funneled literature, letters, and people. Others used the network to pursue their own goals—whether to secure religious toleration, land for their families, investment opportunities, or the chance to create utopian communities.

### The Uses of Networks: Mennonites

Like the Quakers and Pietists, Mennonites also capitalized on their correspondence connections when they became involved in colonizing schemes. Their participation in the practical aspects of migration, however, was directly linked to issues of religious toleration, at least initially. As they helped to resettle Swiss refugees, Dutch and Palatine Mennonites sought returns for their own individual purposes as well as those they were assisting. In contrast to Penn, who used dissenting religious networks as an individual colonizer to recruit immigrants for his province, those representing Swiss refugees became involved in colonization as they sought the best resettlement opportunities for the exiles.

Mennonites did not initially seek to settle refugees in new colonies but began by lobbying appropriate authorities on behalf of fellow believers suffering from persecution.<sup>96</sup> At times they directed their petitions for tolerance to local and regional officials, as was the case in 1660, when Rotterdam Mennonites convinced city officials to write to the city of Bern on behalf of Swiss Anabaptists who had been banished.<sup>97</sup> In other cases, they appealed to heads of state, as the Kreisheim Mennonite church leaders had done in 1680 when they petitioned the Elector Palatine to clarify his policy about meetings for worship.<sup>98</sup> They also recruited other Protestant rulers and members of the nobility sympa-

thetic to their cause to apply pressure on appropriate political leaders. In 1694 Krefeld Mennonites solicited the help of the English king and the Dutch States General in their efforts to free imprisoned congregants from Rheydt, a village that belonged to the Elector Palatine. By this time, the electorate had passed to the Catholic Neuberg branch of the family. Both the Protestant king and the States General sent letters to the Catholic Elector Johann Wilhelm pressuring him to change his policies concerning the Protestant dissenters.<sup>99</sup>

The lobbying efforts of Dutch Mennonites became even more critical in 1709 and 1710, when Swiss officials in Bern organized another concerted effort to banish all remaining Anabaptists. By that time, Dutch Mennonites had formalized their mutual aid activities. They had created the Commission for Foreign Need, a committee of representatives from the various branches of the Mennonite church scattered throughout the Netherlands, to make decisions and solicit funds and household goods on behalf of religious refugees. Because they recognized the need to act quickly, the commission established an executive committee of five or six ministers and deacons in Amsterdam and Rotterdam who could meet on short notice.<sup>100</sup> Commission members corresponded regularly with other congregational leaders throughout the Netherlands, northern Germany, and the Rhine Valley.<sup>101</sup>

Negotiations for religious toleration and migration schemes were linked explicitly in 1710. In January, Johan Ludwig Runckel, the representative of the Dutch States General in Switzerland, sent news that Bern's officials had intensified their attempts to imprison and banish all of the Mennonites there, and he indicated his willingness to assist the commission's lobbying efforts.<sup>102</sup> Bern's government, hoping to send the exiles so far from home that they could not easily return, had contracted with George Ritter, a Bernese merchant, to transport them to England, from where they were to be sent to the American colonies. Proceeds from their confiscated estates were to pay for transportation costs.<sup>103</sup> When commission members received news of the Swiss plans, they petitioned the Dutch States General, asking it to intercede with the Bern government on behalf of the refugees.<sup>104</sup> On March 15, 1710, the States General petitioned Bern officials to free the imprisoned Mennonites. They maintained that the Dutch government, like the Swiss, believed the "Reformed religion is the best and the true religion," and that they

wished "the Mennonites here with us as well as there with you could be brought over to the same religion." They thought, however, that there was "no other means to do this than to convince them with conversation and witness and that the method of force is no longer permissible or appropriate to be used in matters of conscience," but rather that each individual was accountable to God for his or her beliefs. The Dutch also argued that in "a land pretending to be a republic . . . each person has a right to exercise his own free will and belief" rather than being controlled by an established religion.<sup>105</sup>

The Dutch petition arrived too late to help the first set of Swiss refugees, who left Bern in mid-March 1710.<sup>106</sup> By the end of the month a ship carrying fifty-six prisoners arrived in Mannheim, where twenty-eight were permitted to disembark because of illness and age.<sup>107</sup> Government officials who organized the trip, however, made a critical mistake: they failed to secure the appropriate passport for the refugees to travel through Holland en route to England. When the Swiss representative in The Hague requested a passport, the States General decided to send a message of disapproval to Bern and refused to grant it.<sup>108</sup> On April 6, when the ship with the remaining exiles arrived at Nijmegen on the border of the Netherlands, Mennonite leaders there negotiated with the prisoners' guards to release them. Consequently, the Swiss scheme to transport the refugees to the American colonies failed. Some of the prisoners made their way to Rotterdam and Amsterdam; others went to the Palatinate in search of family and friends who had migrated earlier or had disembarked in Mannheim.<sup>109</sup>

Meanwhile, the commission used its influence with the Dutch government and Runckel's connections in Switzerland to improve the lot of those Mennonites still being imprisoned and persecuted in Bern. Hendrik Toren and Jan van Gent, two commission members from Rotterdam, repeatedly communicated with the clerk of the States General, who, in turn, negotiated with the Swiss representative in The Hague. Throughout the spring and summer of 1710, they also lobbied Queen Anne of England and her secretary through the English ambassador at The Hague. By July, the Prussian king had joined the English and Dutch in urging the government of Bern to stop persecuting the Mennonites there.<sup>110</sup> Outside pressure, however, seemed only to increase the resolve of the Swiss; in response, officials in Bern published a broadside threat-

ening to behead any Mennonite exiles who chose to return to their homes and to whip publicly anyone granting lodging to the fugitives.<sup>111</sup>

In spite of intensified persecution, the lobbying of the Dutch Mennonites began to produce other results. Friederich I, king of Prussia, invited the Swiss refugees to his lands, where he promised them religious toleration in exchange for their assistance in his project to drain marshes.<sup>112</sup> The king of Denmark and the count of Hesse also offered to let them settle on their lands.<sup>113</sup> And the queen of England considered several petitions for colonizing schemes to send some of the refugees to Virginia or North Carolina with other "poor Palatine" immigrants who had arrived in London the previous year.<sup>114</sup> In November 1710, the Commission for Foreign Need proposed its own plan to resettle the Swiss exiles in several communities in the Netherlands.<sup>115</sup>

By early 1711, Runckel, the Dutch ambassador in Switzerland, succeeded in obtaining an agreement from the Bern government to free Mennonites who had been imprisoned and grant them amnesty until they could organize their migration from the city. He also negotiated permission for them to take along any money they received from the sale of property.<sup>116</sup> Runckel then used his channels to distribute circular letters from the commission to the Swiss Mennonites (written in Swiss dialect), persuading them to migrate rather than hold out for an end to persecution in Bern.<sup>117</sup> To carry out the proposed migration, Runckel and the commission secured five ships to transport 500–600 refugees down the Rhine to Amsterdam. They hired Ritter to direct the migration because he was familiar with the route. In addition, they assigned assistant directors for each ship to deal with customs houses, tolls, passport presentation, and the procurement of food. Runckel also worked to obtain the necessary passports from the city of Bern, the French and Prussian kings, the imperial court in Austria, and the heads of state in Württemberg, the Palatinate, Mainz, Trier, Hesse, Cologne, and Cleve.<sup>118</sup> By July, he reported that he had received the last of the passports and that the exiles were scheduled to leave on July 13.<sup>119</sup>

The success in rounding up exiles and arranging for their amnesty and the sale of their estates was a significant accomplishment. In addition to the complex negotiations with the Bern government to free those in prison and to allow the remainder to leave, the organizers faced the reluctance of the Swiss refugees to move from their homes. The group

continued to hope for an end to persecution so that they would not need to uproot themselves. Internal conflicts and disputes over biblical interpretation also threatened the migration project. Some refugees refused to travel on the same ships with those who disagreed with their views. In the end, only 346 people of the estimated 500–600 made the trip down the Rhine in late July.<sup>120</sup>

Even as they left their homes, the Swiss refugees continued to consider their resettlement options. They were not altogether happy with the conditions the Prussian king offered. Some expressed concerns about an outbreak of the plague; others suspected the king wanted only the wealthy exiles to settle on his lands. Eventually, they decided against moving there. The majority of the refugees accepted the commission's proposal and went to the Netherlands, where they settled in colonies in Harlingen, Groningen, Kampen, and Deventer. The commission members, who had funded most of their transportation expenses through collections from Dutch and German congregations, agreed to assume the full costs of relocating the Swiss refugees. They promised to help them establish households and to supply provisions for the coming winter. In the Netherlands, of course, the exiles were granted religious toleration.<sup>121</sup>

The colonizing schemes of the Mennonites who were trying to relocate Swiss religious refugees demonstrate, like those of the Quakers, the ways in which participants capitalized on religious communication networks for funneling information about migration. In this case, however, it was those representing the immigrants seeking the best settlement opportunity rather than a colonizer seeking potential immigrants. They negotiated with political leaders and the refugees until they found the option for resettlement that best served the needs of the parties involved. The key information brokers were Runckel, a political diplomat, and commission members with access to politicians at The Hague. Whereas Furly had represented primarily the interests of Pennsylvania's Quaker proprietor, Runckel and the commissioners worked on behalf of the immigrants. In both cases, the same connections that had been used for religious purposes became conduits for logistical information about moving people from one place to another.

The colonizing schemes of the Mennonites who were relocating the Swiss religious refugees also demonstrate, like those of the Quakers, the

ways in which other individuals intersected with the religious networks and capitalized on them for their own interests. Toren and van Gent, the two commission members who regularly lobbied Swiss, English, and Prussian officials at The Hague, had previous experience with English officials that no doubt aided their cause.<sup>122</sup> Toren was a Mennonite minister in Rotterdam who was also involved in the iron trade with England.<sup>123</sup> During the summer of 1709, the two men contracted with James Dayrolle, the British secretary of state at The Hague, to transport the thousands of "poor Palatine Protestants" who arrived in Rotterdam en route to England. They were responsible for collecting and distributing the charities given on the Palatines' behalf, caring for them, and arranging for their transportation.<sup>124</sup> Their participation in Commission for Foreign Needs activities likely made them good candidates for organizing the distribution of charitable funds for the Palatines, and that, in turn, strengthened their role as lobbyists the following year on behalf of the Swiss Mennonites.

Like Toren and van Gent, Ritter, the entrepreneur who transported Swiss refugees to the Netherlands, also brought valuable firsthand knowledge to his tasks. Ritter first became involved in a series of colonizing schemes when he formed a joint-stock company with François Louis Michel and Johann Rudolf Ochs, two other Swiss entrepreneurs, in early 1703. Michel had just returned from his first trip to Virginia and was on his way back to explore Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the Carolinas. First, however, he stopped in London, where he negotiated with Penn on behalf of Ritter and Company to settle Swiss immigrants in Penn's colony.<sup>125</sup> Between then and March 1710, when Ritter oversaw the first transport of Swiss Mennonite refugees down the Rhine, the three entrepreneurs proposed a series of colonizing schemes to the city of Bern, Queen Anne of England, the English Board of Trade, the Carolina Proprietors, and the governor of Virginia. In each case, the planners laid out the logistics and costs of transporting and resettling large numbers of immigrants from Switzerland to America.<sup>126</sup> Ritter's familiarity with the requirements of moving groups of people down the Rhine and across the Atlantic, a process that required crossing numerous political boundaries and obtaining passports from at least eleven governments, made him the perfect candidate for the commission's purpose.<sup>127</sup>

In both cases, the entrepreneurs participating in the Mennonite networks facilitated migration streams that eventually spanned the Atlantic. Several thousand of the immigrants whom Toren and van Gent assisted on their way to England continued to New York in 1709 and 1710.<sup>128</sup> And, while the Swiss Mennonites whom Ritter transported down the Rhine did not initially make it to the British colonies, many migrated to Pennsylvania beginning in 1717.<sup>129</sup> Internal migrations within Europe extended across the ocean as parts of colonial projects.

Like entrepreneurs, political leaders also recognized the benefits of the religious networks and refugees for recruiting settlers. The British government saw the possible advantages that toleration offered for expanding imperial goals, in part because of the lobbying efforts of Quakers and other religious dissenters.<sup>130</sup> When, in the summer of 1709, Queen Anne and her Privy Council considered whether or not to fund the transportation of 13,000 German-speaking immigrants to various parts of the empire, they knew that the potential settlers were not all "poor Protestants" from the Palatinate. But those advocating the immigrants' cause used the rhetoric of religious toleration, the examples of wealth other states had gained by welcoming French Protestant refugees, and popular ideas about a state's population as a source of wealth to justify supporting the "poor Protestant Palatines." By fashioning a new fictional identity for the immigrants that played on English anti-Catholic and anti-French sentiment, their supporters succeeded in raising over £100,000 in private and public funds.<sup>131</sup> The British Empire gained its first significant influx of German-speaking immigrants.

Thus the communication networks crafted by religious dissenters in their efforts to establish religious toleration and to spread their version of the gospel provided access to new groups of potential immigrants that had not been available before. By 1710 the connections began to take on a life of their own, as they intersected with the colonizing impulses of their participants. Individuals within the religious networks pursued the benefits of colonial enterprises for their own interests while continuing to use the information channels that dissenters had established. The British queen, like other European heads of state, took advantage of

thus its wealth. Colonial proprietors and governors continued to recruit immigrants through the same channels, even after religious toleration no longer played a role. Many of the Swiss Mennonites who migrated to the Palatinate and the Netherlands in 1710 and 1711 moved to Pennsylvania and Virginia beginning in 1717. Individual entrepreneurs like Furly and Ritter sought the commercial profits of migration. And the immigrants themselves, regardless of why they chose to leave home, continued to rely on knowledge and news dispensed by participants in those same networks to inform their decisions and secure transportation to the colonies. By providing advantages to participants and others who recognized their benefits, the networks proved critical in shifting sources of immigrants from England to Europe by the turn of the eighteenth century.

The communication channels that dissenters created were an integrative force.<sup>132</sup> They crossed political, cultural, and religious boundaries to create conversations that eventually expanded beyond those interested purely in religious issues. In the process, they facilitated the flow of information and people throughout Europe and the British Atlantic. They were, however, a kaleidoscope—a constantly fluid and flexible series of connections and intersections—rather than a stable set of links. All of the players involved acted in their own interests and for their own purposes. The connections that began in an effort to alleviate religious persecution or to carry out missionary work took on a life of their own as various participants capitalized on them for their own ends. Ultimately the networks connected Great Britain and Europe in a way that allowed colonizers of British America to recruit immigrants from the Continent. But they did not remain constant. By the 1730s the intersections among Quaker, Mennonite, and Pietist groups fostered by Quaker missionary work began to disintegrate, and the recruitment of immigrants to the British colonies was carried out by a handful of private merchant firms with their own information networks.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, the integrative force of the dissenters' networks lasted long enough to provide the dynamic for the settlement of radical dissenters throughout northern Europe and in coastal North America.