

**Heinrich Donner Diary
(Tagebuch)
(1774-1803)**

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In the year 1774, the 20th of September:

I have begun to record in this book, the notable and remarkable events and happenings in our congregation, which occurred during my time of service.

Heinrich Donner, Schoensee

“My God, may you surround myself
and the whole flock with your grace,
Protect us from all injury and harm,
Let us with Jesus’ love and
Your Holy Spirit’s leading, be found
Worthy and one of your Beloved.

I honour and bless your teachings,
That take us from self denial
And lead us to godliness.
So that when we should die,
We enter eternal salvation
As heirs and children of God. Amen

Lord, grant us peace and unity
Throughout our length of days,
So that, after all, my entire flock
Will be saved from any disunity,
Indeed, that we as one heart and soul,
May follow you, O Emmanuel!” Amen

Glory to God alone

September 14, 1735 – I was born on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Danzig and in 1745 I moved with my stepfather from Danzig to Tiegenhof.

June 1, 1753 – I was baptized by *Ohm* Heinrich Peters from the Kleinwerder, and accepted into our congregation in Orloffelfeld, because, at that time, the Bishop of our congregation, Cornelius Grunau, had passed away.

November 15, 1757 – I married Elisabeth Grunau, the widow of Arndt Allerts from Orloffelfeld.

1760 – My name was nominated for the minister election in our congregation, but I was passed over.

1761 – I moved to Schoensee in 1761.

September 21, 1761 – I was elected as a minister by our congregation, with a vote of 75, and preached for the first time on October 26th.

November 23, 1766 – My beloved wife died on December 11th, following giving birth to a little son. My only little son died during the birth and his mother died a short time after. During this time, my little daughter also died. I buried all three bodies at the same time.

November 20, 1770 – I entered a second marriage with Elisabeth Stobbe, daughter of Peter Stobbe from Schoensee.

June 2, 1771 – In our congregation we elected Franz Jantzen from Orloffefeld and Simon Bestvater from Platenhof as lead singers [*Vorsinger*], and on June 23rd we elected *Ohm* David Mekelburger's son Heinrich from Tiegerweide and Hans Quiring from Blumenort as deacons.

November 20, 1771 – *Ohm* David Mekelburger, Bishop of our congregation [Orloffefeld], died at approximately 72 years of age.

May 3, 1772 – I was elected as Bishop of our congregation with a unanimous 37 vote count, and also immediately installed by *Ohm* Jacob Siebert from the Kleinwerder.

September 13, 1772 – We have come under the rule of a Prussian government, and as a result have organized a general meeting of all the congregations that are now under the King of Prussia. We assembled at the home of Peter Regier in Tralauerfeld with the following people:

Flemish congregations:

Flemish from Elbing – Bishop Antony Wilk, Minister Gert Wiebe, Deacon Isaac Reimer
Four quarters of the Tiegenhof congregations – Bishop Dirk Thiessen and Ministers Isaac Peters, Isaac Classen, Hans von Riesen, Isaac Toews, Cornelis Wall, Paul von Riesen
Heubuden – Bishop Cornelis Regier, Ministers Peter Regier, Dirk Klassen, Isbrand Regier, Hans Klassen, Abram Regier, and Deacon Franz Dick and Deacon Arndt Klassen

Frisian congregations:

Our congregation [Orloffefeld] – Bishop Heinrich Donner, Minister Johann Bestvater
Kleinwerder – Bishop Jacob Siebert, Deacon Jan Sperling
Stuhm – Bishop Hans Ewert, Deacon Jacob Ewert
Montau – Bishop Abram Schroeder, Minister Steffen Koerber
Culm – Deacon Hans Unrau, Deacon Dirk Franz
Groningen near Culm [Przechowka Groningen Old Flemish]: Bishop Benjamin Wedel,

At this assembly it was agreed that outside representatives would not be included with the list of congregations.

There was a loving atmosphere at this general assembly. We greeted each other, without exception, with a brotherly kiss or a kiss of peace. It was suggested and decided that we wanted to send a gift to the royal kitchen in Marienburg on the day of homage, which fell on September 27th. The gift consisted of 2 fat oxen, 400 pounds of butter, 20 cheeses, 50 pairs of hens, and 60 pairs of ducks. At the same time a petition was included, outlining our regular faith practices and a request for freedom from all recruitment and military service. Thereupon we received a decision from the King indicating we are welcome to our view, but we would have to put up with paying a reasonable amount of protection money annually, the amount not determined yet.

We also received an order from the Land Steward Court in Marienburg requesting us to produce a record of births, deaths, marriages and attendance at communion for our congregation. I have also maintained a separate book with a yearly accounting of those events in our congregation.

1773 – In response to an order from the King, we had to record how many Mennonites there were in all of West Prussia, young and old, and how much land they owned. There were 13,069 people and 2038 *Huben* 106 *Ruten* of land [84 thousand acres].

June 20, 1773 – A survey was made of the young men in the area, excluding the Mennonites, and around St. Michael's Day [Michaelmas], September 29th, the first recruitment for military service occurred, for the *Krodau* Fusilier Regiment in Marienburg.

January 1774 – We received an order from His Excellency the government chamber President von Domhart to compile a list of all Mennonites living in East and West Prussia, and also Lithuania, as well as the number of *Huben* of land they owned. The amount of protection money was to be determined. In order to complete the task, a general meeting was called for. We wanted to draw up the whole list and wondered if it would be possible for some of the protection money to be forgiven. The annual demand which came in June, was for 5,000 *Reichsthaler*. The meeting was held on August 22nd at the home of *Ohm* Hans Classen, a Flemish minister.

The following congregations were present:

Heubuden – Bishop Cornelis Regier; Ministers Hans Klassen, Gert Wiens, Peter Regier, Dirk Klassen, Isbrand Regier; Deacons Arndt Klassen and Franz Dick

Our congregation [Orlofffeld] – Bishop Heinrich Donner; Ministers Cornelis Grunau and Johann Bestvater

From the Flemish congregations in Tiegenhagen – Bishop Dirk Thiessen; Ministers Jacob Hamm, Jacob Schultz, Isaac Toews, Peter Esau, Paul Friesen; Deacon Peter Klaszen
Elbing – Bishop Antony Wilck, Minister Gert Wiebe
Thiendorf – Bishop Jacob Siebert; Deacons Johann Pauls and Johann Sperling
Schweingrub: Bishop Hans Ewert, Deacon Peter Jantzen
Graudenz – Minister Cornelis Goertz, Deacon Heinrich Ewert
Culm – Deacons Dirk Franz and Hans Unrau
Schwetz – Bishop Benjamin Wedel

Danzig: Frisian – Minister Heinrich Vogt, Deacon Jan Feit
Danzig: Flemish – Minister Kornels Eppe, Deacon Peter Thiessen
Lithuania – Bishop Hendrich Jantzen, Deacon Kornels Leicke

No one was present from Koenigsberg because they sent their sentiments in writing and announced that they would give 200 *Florin* from their congregation. At this gathering it was decided to talk with Supreme President von Domhart about the issuing of the demand [for the protection money] which was also for the past year, since it had been postponed until Domhart recovered from his illness in Koenigsberg.

N.B. Statement regarding acceptance into membership: At our first meeting of the ministers of our congregations who were present, we agreed within our congregations, to put an end to the acceptance of the *Aussentrau*. This was how it was presented to all our congregations, that anyone who married an Evangelical or Catholic person would not be a member of our congregation. That person must exclude himself, without a ban, because it was feared that we would become associated too closely with the stance of the soldiers.

In the Schweingrub congregation this issue was raised by three brethren, namely Franz Goertz, Gils Jantzen, and Jan Classen. They recorded their thoughts in a lengthy summary on paper and sent it around to all the congregations. Then a meeting was held in Schweingrub [8 June 1774], also attended by the three friends, who did not want to be subject to this arrangement but wanted to claim that it went against the mercy and compassion of God. After much back and forth, they were forbidden from continuing, but encouraged to bear with each other in love in this matter and look to the time when it might be helpful to dissuade outside marriages. And thus, we parted from one another.

Specification: the number of *Huben* and people in West and East Prussia, and Lithuania consisted of 2,177 *Huben* 28 ½ *Morgen*, and 13,495 people.

We did not receive a release from paying the protection money, rather we received an order that we had to pay it annually and therefore, also had to pay for the previous year.

1775 – We received a rescript from the royal government in Marienwerder, that we are to pay the *Jura Stola*, pastoral perquisites or church dues, the baptism, wedding, and burial fees, to

the Catholic priests. From time to time, we have had great problems with the Evangelical priests, because of the persecution we have suffered at the hands of the evangelical population.

The arrangements for the payment of the protection money have also been made. The congregations have divided the fees accordingly. First, each person, young or old, was charged 15 *Groschen*. The balance of the fee was reckoned to the *Huben*. In our congregation the fee was imposed as follows: from each *Hube* 4 *Florin*, all males older than 15 years gave 1 *Florin*, females older than 15 years gave 15 *Groschen* and young people, as well on the interest on capital for each one hundred they also had to give 3 *Groschen* annually. The people from Koenigsberg gave 200 *Florin* annually.

May 7, 1775 – Minister *Ohm* David Horn of our congregation died at 65 years of age.

Last year [the property belonging to] our congregation consisted of 177 *Huben*, 20 *Morgen*, 3 *Ruten*.

In 1774 the number of people in our congregation was as follows:

Males, 15 years and older	264
Females, 15 years and older	249
Males under 15 years	107
Females under 15 years	117
Total	737

This year, 1775, the number of *Huben* in our congregation has remained the same as last year.

The number of people in 1775 is as follows:

Males, 15 years and older	262
Females, 15 years and older	260
Males under 15 years	111
Females under 15 years	114
Total	747

The 1775 levy of the protection money: Prior to the past year, our congregation paid 1044 florins 19 *Groschen* of protection money; since this was not correct, after the redistribution we had to pay 1104 *Florin*.

July 6, 1775 – Our representatives submitted a petition to the King in Marienwerder, with the goal of obtaining a *Privilegium*, a charter of privileges regarding conscientiousness, military practices and faith practices. The representatives, Johan Sperling from Grunau in the Kleinwerder and Cornelius Willems from Neumuensterberg, received an answer from the King, that they should approach the Cabinet Official von Kueper, from whom they would receive the news as to whether the petition was accepted or not. Supreme President Domhart convinced them that it was not necessary and that they should just return home, which they did. The

other day however, they were called in to the Royal Secretary, but since they were not present, we got the news through other people, that the King had graciously accepted the petition. The matter was handed over to the Minister of State von Goeren, who himself was to draw up the *Privilegium*. Thereafter, it was considered a good idea to travel to Berlin and visit the King to remit the protection money, as well as to submit changes to the content. *Ohm* Peter Regier from Tralauerfeld and I were delegated for this task.

July 18, 1775 – We began our journey at 3 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, leaving from Stolzenburg near Danzig on a regular pass and arrived in Berlin at 2 o'clock in the morning on Sunday, July 23rd, safe and in good health. The formulation of the *Privilegium* was entrusted to Minister Mahsau. Since he did not fully understand the items in the original petition, he wrote to the West Prussian Chamber for further information and clarification. We presented our *Privilegium* with King Wladyslaw, with all the orders and privileges we had received at the time of the Prussian government and which were all recorded. We were shown grace, in having the items that were contrary to our conscience in the petition, presented to the King and completely changed. Minister Mahsau assured us that the *Privilegium* would follow in the mail, without fail.

July 30, 1775 – Cognizant of the minister's assurance and intentions, we left Berlin on Sunday at 7 o'clock in the morning, to travel to Potsdam and present a petition to the King regarding the remittal of the church dues to the Catholic priests. We accomplished this on July 31st and also spoke with the King himself, as he rode out to review the soldiers. We received the answer on Tuesday, August 1st, that the matter would be investigated, and so we departed on August 2nd and returned to Berlin.

August 6, 1775 – After we bade farewell to Minister Mahsau and the King's senior official Kreuschner and the Reformed Minister Oelrichheit, whom we met in the courtyard, we departed Berlin on Sunday, August 6th around the noon hour, 11 o'clock, on the regular pass. We arrived in Stoltzenberg early Friday morning, August 11th, at 5 o'clock. We rested early in the day and then, together with my wife, Ertmann Stobbe and his wife who had come to pick us up, we travelled home, arriving on Saturday, August 12th. It was an arduous journey, with extreme heat, but completed in good health and good spirits, blessings and praise be to God.

September 19, 1775 – I wrote to our teaching ministry to ask them to gather at the vicarage [*Predigthaus*] on September 21st, because we had to put in order some matters regarding unity and because we wanted to elect an additional 2 men for the teaching ministry. Since we were meeting, *Ohm* Jacob Penner from Petershagenfeld, who was one of our ministers, sent a letter of resignation, saying that he would no longer serve in the preaching ministry and completely secede from it. He had not participated in communion with us for some time and in his preaching he often times used quite strange and unusual interpretations. Apart from that, he distanced himself from us. We had many opportunities to serve together with souls similar to

him, however we accepted all that he had to offer. In order not to give him a reason to separate from us, because no cause was given for separating from us and the church, I and *Ohm* Cornelis Grunau visited him to talk about the matter. We did not accomplish anything with him, he didn't change his mind. We took our leave, wished him "God be with you" and asked him to reconsider if he could resign from his preaching ministry in good conscience. He was quite at peace with it, even chuckled and spoke quite flippantly, something that pained us. May God grant him the true realisation of what is the right or wrong action in this matter.

October 1, 1775 – We came to a consensus to conduct an election for the teaching ministry on the 16th Sunday after Trinity Sunday. The candidates were Jan Quiring from Orlofffeld, Hans Horn from Tiegerweide, David Bestvater from Mierau and Heinrich Penner from Tiegenhagen. The result of the election was as follows: 32 votes for Jan Quiring, 27 votes for Hans Horn, 7 votes for David Bestvater, and 15 votes for Heinrich Penner, resulting in the first two being elected as ministers. May God strengthen them with his heavenly wisdom, so that they will offer clear teaching and lead a holy life in the church, and therefore be found to be faithful beacons before God.

November 12, 1775 – 22 Sundays after Trinity Sunday *Ohm* Hans Horn preached for the first time. The introductory remarks dealt with Judith's defeat of Holofernes and the sermon text was 1. Corinthians 12: 1-9.

November 19, 1775 – 23 Sundays after Trinity Sunday *Ohm* Jan Quiring preached for the first time. The introductory remarks dealt with the important vigilance of the watchman, based on the prophet Ezekiel 13: 16-19, and the sermon dealt with the cleansing of the heart, with a text from Psalm 51:12. We must first recognize our uncleanness and then attain and continually maintain a clean heart from God. God's mercy is increasingly filling these two young men with wisdom, so that they are becoming very valuable in our congregation and that God's kingdom will spread more and more, and Satan's kingdom be destroyed. May God grant that.

Now I must recall how many in our congregation were born, died or were married each year. This is recorded according to the church year, which goes from November 15th of one year to November 15th of the next year.

1771 – 1772	28 births, 28 deaths, 8 couples married
1772 – 1773	15 births, 23 deaths, 11 couples married
1773 – 1774	18 births, 17 deaths, 7 couples married
1774 – 1775	21 births, 35 deaths, 12 couples married

November 30, 1775 – This year it happened that one of our brethren by the name of Abram Krueger became engaged to a Flemish young woman by the name of Katarina Priesz. Because the Flemish *Ohms* would not accept him without baptism and these two wanted to get married, we presented the situation to our brethren. Since there was no opposition, they were married

on November 30th by *Ohm* Cornelius Grunau. It would be good if each could remain in their church, but only time will tell if the Flemish *Ohms* will recognize the marriage of their sister in Christ. I have spoken with their Bishop *Ohm* Dirk Thiessen, suggesting they not ban her from the congregation. We looked upon it as a valid marriage and would hope that they would look upon us with brotherly love and that is why we should have married them. He explained that it could not happen now, because there were still many hard-nosed people in their midst, therefore we married them. May God struggle with the once deeply rooted evil people who bring on ruin, overrule them and help lift them up, unite our hearts in true brotherly love. Then the focus will not be on the self, but on the well-being of the others in the community, which would be to the glory of God and the salvation of all souls.

February 14, 1776 – A general meeting was held at the home of Peter Regier in Tralauerfeld. The following is a record of the *Huben* and the number of people in our congregation:

<i>Huben</i>	180 <i>Huben</i> 2 <i>Morgen</i>
People	689

The protection money that has been calculated:

From the <i>Huben</i>	684 <i>Florin</i> 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ <i>Groschen</i>
From the people	344 <i>Florin</i> 15 <i>Groschen</i>
Total	1028 <i>Florin</i> 22 $\frac{2}{3}$ <i>Groschen</i>

This year we received the order to pay the protection money, from now on, in the prescribed quarterly installments, that being on March 1st, on June 1st, on September 1st and on December 1st. Until now, we have been making one payment for the total amount.

In 1776 in our congregation there were:

Births	19
Deaths	28
Baptisms	20
Marriages	10 couples

In 1776 the total number of Mennonites and their *Huben* in all of West Prussia, East Prussia and Lithuania are as follows:

<i>Huben</i>	2189	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>Morgen</i>
People	12,919	

February 1777 – At the beginning of this year many people in our congregation died. 10 died in the month of February; fewer died thereafter.

April 24, 1777 – A general meeting was held at the Gurcke [Heubuden] at the home of Arndt Klassen. The representatives from Koenigsberg and Lithuania were not present. The protection money was divided among the groups and they again talked about travelling to Berlin to complete the preparation of the *Privilegium*.

Our congregational information follows, with the amount of protection money we will pay this year.

For 174 <i>Huben</i> , 21 <i>Morgen</i>	698 <i>Florin</i> 24 <i>Groschen</i>
From 627 people	313 <i>Florin</i> 15 <i>Groschen</i>
Total	1,012 <i>Florin</i> 9 <i>Groschen</i>

July 3, 1777 – Minister von Gaudi from Berlin came to Tiegenhof in response to a royal order to visit all administrative chambers. I and Johann Busenitz from Marienburg talked with him and requested his mercy in dealing with us. He answered that he would do that and suggested we come to see him in Berlin, which we then decided to do.

August 6, 1777 – Jonas Quiring and Arent Friesen, both of them from Stobbendorf, appeared before the members of our ministry in Orlofffeld because of a conflict between them. They came to an agreement. This agreement was drafted by us and each of them has received a signed copy of the promise, the third copy can be found in the church records.

August 26, 1777 – I and Johann Busenitz from Marienburg, as we had been instructed to do, left on Tuesday from Danzig to travel to Berlin. We rented the carriage of coachman Schultz and took along saddlehorses.

August 30, 1777 – We arrived in Berlin, safe and sound, on Saturday at 10 o'clock in the evening and thereupon presented a petition to Minister von Gaudi, in which we continued to negotiate the remittal or an adjustment of the protection money, and requested the freedom to purchase houses in cities as well as in the country. The petition also dealt with the payment of the *Jura Stola*, church dues, to the Evangelical parish priests and the preparation of the *Privilegium of Grace*.

October 5, 1777 – We only received the statement of the decision from the Director General on October 5th. Since it was not as we had requested, we travelled to Potsdam on October 6th and presented the King with the petition ourselves. The petition dealt with the same issues as the previous one and we had to talk with private Cabinet Minister Kueper ourselves. He told us that the King had settled our issues himself, and the document would be mailed out to us. Thereafter we returned to Berlin again.

October 16, 1777 – Our innkeeper, whose name was Boelitz, and lived in the inn named “The City of Paris” on the neighbouring street, sold us two horses and provided us with a coachman that would take us to Danzig. And so, we left Berlin on October 16th, Saint Gall’s Day, and arrived in Danzig on Saturday, October 25th at 5 o'clock in the evening. On Sunday my wife also arrived here with *Ohm* Jan Quiring and we drove home on Monday, October 26th. We all arrived safely at 6 o'clock in the evening. After being away from home for 9 weeks, I give praise and

thanks to God for all his blessings. Copies of the petition and the statement of the decision, the *Privilegium*, can be found in the church records.

December 17, 1777 – Clas Friesen from Platenhof, who was our oldest lead singer [*Vorsänger*], died today after having led the singing for 35 years.

In our congregation this year there were:

Births	15
Deaths	33
Marriages	12 couples
Baptisms	16

1778 – In the new year a vote was introduced within the teaching ministry regarding the selection of a new lead singer. Jonas Penner from Orloff was chosen by drawing lots.

January 17, 1778 – We have received on the 12th of February a statement in response to our submitted petition in Berlin. It was prepared by the West Prussian chamber alone and all our requests were refused.

February 4, 1778 – We met at the home of Heinrich Mekelburger from Orlofffeld to settle the costs of the Berlin trip. It was decided that the charge for the trip expenses would amount to 21 *Groschen* Prussian currency per *Hube*.

May 9, 1778 – A meeting with representatives from all congregations was held at the Gurcke [Heubuden] at the home of Isbrand Regier to determine the assignment of the protection money. The number of *Huben* and people from all congregations follows:

No. of <i>Huben</i>	2,118	16 <i>Morgen</i>
No. of people	11,306	

Since the number of people as well as the number of *Huben* have decreased, the amount of protection money assigned to each *Hube* is higher, namely 4 *Florin* 6 *Groschen*.

This year our congregation has the following:

175 <i>Huben</i> at 4 <i>Florin</i> 6 <i>Groschen</i>	735 <i>Florin</i>
608 People	304 <i>Florin</i>
Total	1,039 <i>Florin</i>

N.B. In spring, Samuel Quiring from Orloff, a deacon in our congregation, died.

June 21, 1778 – After some discussion at communion, two men were nominated for the deacon election, in which one deacon was to be elected. The nominees were David Mekelburger from Tiegerweide and Heinrich Jantzen from Reimerswalde. David Mekelburger was elected with 36 votes, whereas Heinrich Jantzen had 19 votes.

In our congregation this year there were:

Births	30
Deaths	34
Marriages	12 couples
Baptisms	14

March 20, 1779 – Bishop Jacob Siebert from Thiensdorf has received from the royal government in Marienwerder, an order to inform them why Isaac Niessen’s daughter, who conceived a child out of wedlock with a Russian officer, a child who was baptized in the Catholic church according to the usual Polish practice, could not be accepted into the Kleinwerder congregation, as was her desire. Isaac Niessen from Schwansdorf, as her step-father, had appealed the decision. Because this order went to *Ohm* Jacob Siebert, he and Deacon Jan Grunau came to us for counsel on how to respond to this appeal. It was decided that I should travel to Marienburg on March 30th to talk with *Ohm* Johann Sperling from the Kleinwerder congregation, who was there, and together prepare a response, which did happen. The order and the answer drawn up in response, on behalf of *Ohm* Jacob Siebert, is in my custody and safe keeping.

April 25, 1779 – The wife of the baker, Hermann Stobbe from Tiegenhof, named Catarina Woelke and a member of the Flemish church, wished to become a member of our congregation. After I asked her several questions, which needed to be answered with “Yes”, I received her into membership as a sister [*Mitschwester*] and in the presence of our brothers and sisters. The sermon I presented on this occasion was on the Confession of Faith. On the same day as the ask for forgiveness from the wife of Hermann Stobbe was accepted, our deacon Hans Quiring asked for a pardon, in front of our brothers and sisters, regarding a dispute he had with David Niebuhr involving the deceased [Jan] Kliewer who was married to Niebuhr’s daughter. The dispute had gone on for approximately 5 years and finally the two had been reconciled. Niebuhr and [Heinrich] Jantzen from Schleusentamm, however, have remained united because the 10 *Ducaten* which Kliewer had borrowed from Jantzen to pay his debt to Quiring, and the reason for the conflict, had not been paid back to Jantzen by Niebuhr’s daughter.

May 5, 1779 – *Ohm* Johann Sperling and *Ohm* Johann Pauls from the Kleinwerder congregation came to me and showed me the decision from the royal government in the matter of the daughter of Isaac Niessen, indicating that she could be accepted in her congregation. They, on behalf of their ministry, came to me to ask if that young woman should ever be accepted into the church because she was baptized as a child in the Catholic Church. The Kleinwerder *Ohms* had come to a decision to accept her without baptism, but through a confirmation. I did not want to give my approval regarding this and so they insisted that I get in touch with the Danzig church about the matter, which I did. On May 9th I received a reply saying they agreed with my way of thinking, that their whole ministry felt, as I did, that the infant baptism of other religions was not regarded as having validity in our church. As a result, I and *Ohm* Peter Schroeder, our

oldest deacon, travelled to *Ohm* Jacob Siebert, who was the bishop of the Kleinwerder congregation. On May 11th he called the whole teaching ministry together and there was much discussion regarding this matter. They were unable to give scriptural evidence for their statements and our reasons which were supported by Holy Scripture, namely that we recognize no other baptism other than that based on faith, therefore we could not possibly validate the infant baptism of other religions, in our congregation through confirmation. We viewed it as contributing to a complete deterioration leading to damaging consequences. Finally, after much back-and-forth discussion, they resolved that if other congregations wanted to do this by baptism only, they would choose that also. As a brother, I asked them to hold fast to the confession of truth, and not to waiver, or even yield to the fear of man or to make an accommodation. I have the young woman in my home and want to accept her into the congregation on Pentecost (It was the desire of *Ohm* Siebert to accept her into the church, but he didn't want to be alone in his decision), but in no other way than through baptism, even if she was already baptized as an infant in the Lutheran church. Because we have the privilege of free *Exercitium Religionis*, the exercise of one's religion, we should also not encounter any restriction in the acceptance of people in a similar situation. That particular decision can be found recorded in the royal statement of privileges.

N.B. This spring the Danzig congregation installed an organ in its church building and it was played for the first time on March 14th, which aroused opposition from several members. Also, the friends from Rosenkranz, as was reported earlier, have spoken up against the refusal to accept outside marriages. They have maintained their unity with the Danzig congregation because of its approval of outside marriages.

May 18, 1779 – There was a meeting with representatives from all the congregations at the home of Arndt Classen in the Gurcke [Heubuden], regarding the regulation of the *Cadetten* [protection] money. *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau and *Ohm* Jan Quiring travelled there on behalf of our church. The number of *Huben* and people in all the congregations follows:

No. of <i>Huben</i>	2129	22 <i>Morgen</i>
No. of people	11,131	

The *Cadetten* money has come with some costs, because we did not willingly want to help and the levy will amount to 5 *Florin* per *Hufe*. The costs for our congregation are as follows:

176 <i>Huben</i> at 5 <i>Florin</i>	880 <i>Florin</i>
620 people at 15 <i>Groschen</i>	314 <i>Florin</i>
Total	1194 <i>Florin</i>

[May 22, 1779] - The day before Pentecost, the Kleinwerder ministerial sent one of their deacons to us to inquire as to whether it was still our plan to accept the young woman, whom I have in my house, into our congregation. The young woman was the illegitimate daughter of Honsche of Stutthof [he was Adrian von Honsche], left behind and a daughter of her mother's sister. Were we going to accept her into the congregation on the middle feast day? We

responded that indeed we were going to do that, through her baptism. They complained that the brethren in their church were uneasy about that and feared how they would be looked upon by the Anabaptists for baptizing Isaac Niessen's daughter, and ridiculed and scorned by their fellow villagers, even possibly severely punished by the authorities. That is why they asked again regarding their decision to accept the young woman into the church without baptism and only through confirmation, wondering whether they would be able to continue to remain in brotherly fellowship with them. Our response was that they could answer the question themselves, after they considered that baptism was the most important aspect of our body, and still is for all our churches in Holland and elsewhere, where they have the freedom to practice their religion and infant baptism was the tradition. This is indicated by a current example of a person from the Danzig congregation, Johann Bark, who was probably baptized as an infant and went to Holland to become a Mennonite and be accepted into the church through baptism. If they validated infant baptism in the Kleinwerder congregation, they may overrule the fellowship. We are going to follow our confession of faith, even though there are brethren among us who don't go along with it, for fear of what other people will say, nevertheless we will do it. We asked the Kleinwerder ministerial to reconsider what they were doing, so that it may be acceptable in the eyes of God and not to be pleasing to people, lest they bring upon themselves the wrath of God.

[May 23, 1779] - On the middle feast day of Pentecost, I served the young woman Maria, the surviving daughter of Honsche and the other candidates with baptism, in the presence of a large assembly, among them was our administrative official [*Amtmann*] with many of his friends. I do not yet know, what the Kleinwerder congregation will have done.

N.B. The Kleinwerder congregation followed our example, and *Ohm* Jacob Siebert, as Bishop, had baptized the daughter of Isaac Niessen on the same day.

[May 30, 1779] - On the Sunday after Pentecost, after the sermon, I informed the brethren that Heinrich Jantzen from Schleusentamm had reconciled with the daughter of David Niebuhr. Thus, he, H[einrich] Jantzen credited D[avid] Niebuhr's daughter the 10 *Ducaten* which he had lent to her deceased husband, Jan Kliewer, cancelling the debt. She is against this, because she owes him that amount, but because she is poor, cannot pay him anything. However, she is willing to pay the expenses incurred in the [administrative] office during the long process. Therefore, Jantzen wants to partake in communion on the upcoming Sunday. The brethren have no objection to that, but David Niebuhr still does not want to recognize any agreement.

[June 6, 1779] - On the first Sunday after Trinity Sunday, we celebrated communion and 432 people were in attendance.

N.B. Something to think about: In Kleinsee, near Culm, among the Mennonites known as Gründiger [Groningen Old Flemish] some of the householders live on the property of a

nobleman. They are unable to leave without help with payment of about 3,000 *Florin* in rent. As a result, it was decided, in response to their wish, to provide financial help from all the congregations, our congregations as well as the Flemish congregations, amounting to 1 *Florin* per *Hube*. We have our amount, which was not that much, and at the meeting on May 18th we want to give it to *Ohm* Benjamin Wedel, the Bishop of the founding settlers in Culm, who will pass it on to them. Aid is also coming from Holland, so that this indebtedness to their master does not continue. The written exchanges have gone back and forth about that and I have several copies.

... *illegible lines*... [June or July] I travelled to the Schweingrub congregation and preached and the ministers there told me that the aforementioned men from Rosenkranz who made an example of the *Aussentrau*, and who were dissuaded from all the Prussian and Lithuanian congregations, continued to partake in communion at the Danzig congregation which still approved of the *Aussentrau*. These, I would say, approximately 60 people wanted to set up their own church and completely separate themselves from us. Because I worried about the many serious consequences such a separation could have, I presented the matter to our ministerial. They thought it would be good for myself and *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau to travel to the Kleinwerder, to talk with Bishop *Ohm* Jacob Siebert, which did happen. All considered that it would be of value to write to *Ohm* Isaac Stobbe in Danzig, asking him to warn the friends from Rosenkranz about adhering to their plan of separation. We wanted to have a meeting right after August to work at bringing about unity. *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau has reported this to *Ohm* Stobbe.

N.B. In the unsettled year, 1778, I and Gert Wiebe from Ellerwald, who was the bishop in the Flemish congregation in Elbing, compiled a draft of a children's catechism and presented it to all the congregations, in order to review it. After a number of changes, it was printed, approved by both churches and used by the children in the schools.

July 28, 1779 – *Ohm* Stobbe from Danzig wrote that he made our suggestion clear to the men from Rosenkranz and at the same time, told us that those from Nessau wrote him to say that they had elected a bishop and ...*illegible lines*...they also announce that Johann Classen and Franz Pauls, both from Rosenkranz, were elected as Ministers in Nessau to preach for the brethren who were part of the Schweingrub congregation and against the abolition of the *Aussentrau*. Therefore, the separation is complete, and what will happen in the future, only time will tell.

August 29, 1779 – I received a letter from *Ohm* Stobbe in Danzig, asking me to write to the congregation in Nessau, in his stead, to connect with the bishop. He was of the opinion that that would restore the deteriorating love and respect. I responded that what I had to offer would not be well received by them, since they would have sought me out, if they were looking for my help. Then it would be my duty to serve them.

On August 27th a meeting took place of all our congregations in Schweingrub, to prevent or overturn the separation because of the *Aussentrau*. The two newly elected ministers had already started to preach in the homes and desired to preach in the church building on every third Sunday, which the congregation did not want to accommodate. The Kleinwerder, Graudenz and our ministers were all present, two from each congregation, but those from Culm and Danzig did not come. After much back-and-forth discussion, the best idea was for the Schweingrub congregation to again accept the *Aussentrau* and reunite with those from Rosenkranz. Thereupon, *Ohm* Johann Sperling from the Kleinwerder and I had to drive to Rosenkranz and talk with the friends, whose heartfelt desire was for unity. In fact, the elected Ministers Jan Classen and Franz Pauls, as well as Deacon Franz Gertz, wanted to relinquish their positions in order to keep the peace, and resume their previous role in the congregation. For this reason, we scheduled a meeting in the church building involving all brethren, including those from Rosenkranz. After much discussion on the matter, the decision remained that the church wanted to unite with those in Rosenkranz, relinquish their positions and accept the *Aussentrau* again. They made a pledge to the men to select them at the next minister election. They were satisfied with that arrangement, but the rest of the brethren from Rosenkranz did not want to release their ministers. Finally, a decision was reached that they would correspond with the Danzig and Nessau congregations, seeking their advice.

I was preoccupied by the idea brought up by the other ministers. I then shared words of encouragement based on Psalm 133 and thereafter engaged with both sides, that if we, the other congregations were accepting of mixed marriages, for example, it would have been easier to unite them. Those from Graudenz and Kleinwerder wanted nothing to do with it, but we said if it would prove helpful, we would do it. *Ohm* Abram Schroeder from the Graudenz congregation was to communicate the purpose of the uniting with Nessau and I immediately shared it with *Ohm* Stobbe, with a plea to do everything possible to enable the coming together to proceed. The congregation was imposing the two ministers, who were not elected by them, but that could not happen, and the men did not wish that either. May God direct everything furthermore, only to the best end.

September 15, 1779 – Because I had not received any news as to how the matter stood, I wrote about it to Gils Jantzen from Rosenkranz on September 15th and to Nessau on September 17th. Both letters were signed by me. On September 25th I received a reply from Gils Jantzen about Jan Classen, the newly elected minister, saying that he would not keep his promise to distance himself from his minister role. On September 27th I responded to his letter and informed him that Franz Pauls, the other Minister at Rosenkranz, came to see me and requested that I come back to continue to deal with the matter. He told me he had renounced the minister role in front of the brethren, in order to further the uniting process. Thereupon, I arranged with *Ohm* Siebert to travel there again, on October 9th.

October 5, 1779 – I notified *Ohm* Isaac Stobbe and immediately received his reply, that we should stay with our previous statement. He would not give his approval to the Rosenkraenzer, and if he could, come there himself.

October 9, 1779 – I travelled to Schweingrub with *Ohm* Cornelius Grunau and met there with three ministers from the Nessau congregation, namely Peter Bartel, Jacob Bartel and Zacharias Bartel, as well as *Ohm* Jacob Siebert and Johann Sperling from the Kleinwerder. We then talked about becoming one body and my correspondence with them had motivated those from Nessau to join us for the conversation.

October 10, 1779 – We assembled in the church on Sunday. *Ohm* Peter Bartel offered an admonition: his opening was from Matthew 5: 13-14 and his sermon text from Revelation 3:20. After the sermon, it was first agreed that the *Ohms* from Nessau should meet with those from Rosenkranz and suggest that no division could happen or they would have to relinquish their minister role, which did happen. In the evening we met at the home of Peter Jantzen at Peglau where the people from Nessau brought us the news that the Rosenkraenzer accepted the relinquishing of the preaching role of their ministers. If the church desired to call them as ministers in the short while or further out, they would accept that. If that was not the case, they would be at peace with it. In order to not completely reject the Nessau congregation's election of ministers, we all recognized these two men as ministers elected by them [the Rosenkraenzer]. If they should move away from here, which was their intention, we wanted to give them a minister's certificate. Here in the Schweingrub congregation they would have to refrain from preaching until the whole church called them to it.

October 11, 1779 – Brothers and sisters gathered in the morning in the church, for several days ago *Ohm* Cornelius Grunau had been summoned to preach. His opening remarks were based on Philippians 2:12-13 and the sermon text was Luke 10:42. After the sermon, I informed the brothers and sisters that the unification had taken place and therefore, the congregation again accepted the *Aussentrau*, however, the Rosenkraenzer came to the church with their ministers as brothers. I shared a brief admonition to all, ministers and hearers alike, from Jude 20 and 21 which was heard amid the shedding of many tears. We drove home the same day. Because the friends from Nessau wanted to come to us out of love, but not sooner than Tuesday, our *Ohm* Jan Quiring travelled to Marienburg to pick them up. They arrived at our place at 4 o'clock in the evening and *Ohm* Johann Bestvater and Cornelius Grunau also arrived to welcome them. The next day, Wednesday, we drove to Tiegenhof to *Ohm* Johann Bestvater. When we asked the friends to serve us with the Word of God, they wanted to oblige, so we wrote our brethren, that they should come together at the church on Thursday, October 14th. This did happen and *Ohm* Jacob Bartel, as the youngest minister, preached in front of a large gathering. The opening remarks focused on Romans 12:1 and the sermon text on Psalm 51:12. He preached in High German and his words were particularly edifying.

October 15, 1779 – On Friday, October 15th, I accompanied the friends from Nessau as far as Danzig, where we all visited *Ohm* Isaac Stobbe and Isaac von Duehren. On Saturday, October 16th we were homeward bound and tears flowed as we parted from each other. The interaction with these dear men was loving and quite sensitive; it felt like our hearts were quite entwined in love. May our loving God receive us by his grace and before the throne of the Lamb, unite us again in never ending love.

N.B. Something to think about: At the presentation, the friends from Rosenkranz expressed that after the fall, unity should be maintained in the congregation in Schweingrub. Because of the disunity, they had not had services for some time. They wanted me to bring that about, and we agreed that whoever was asked to, should serve them. *Ohm* Siebert, who had done it for a long time, wanted to continue doing it. On the 20th Sunday after Trinity Sunday [October 17, 1779], the *Ohms* wanted to make the presentation to the brethren. On that morning several brethren made it known, that if *Ohm* Siebert would serve communion, that would lead to disunity again. As a result, two of the *Ohms*, namely Jacob Penner and Peter Jantzen travelled to the Kleinwerder to tell *Ohm* Siebert, who became very angry. Finally, however, he relented, and they could return to me.

October 22, 1779 – The two *Ohms* came to see me and ask me to serve their congregation, which I accepted and the 22nd Sunday after Trinity Sunday was selected for that. I wrote to *Ohm* Johann Sperling and *Ohm* Jacob Siebert, informing them that I would be serving the communion and requested that someone from their ministerial come with me. After that I got a letter from *Ohm* Sperling with the news that I provoked *Ohm* Siebert to anger. As a result, I decided, together with *Ohm* Cornelius Grunau, to travel to see *Ohm* Sperling on October 28th, and all of us went to talk with *Ohm* Siebert. After many harsh words and attacks, they reached the consensus that I was to travel there to serve the congregation and *Ohm* Johann Sperling would accompany me. The dear old *Ohm* Jacob Siebert was very bitter towards me, but when I presented him with the choice of whether it was better to destroy the unity in Schweingrub or to build it up, he had to back down. He saw what I was doing as damaging his honour, although I had to do it solely for the reason of keeping the peace.

October 30, 1779 – On October 30th I travelled to Schweingrub with deacon *Ohm* Jacob Quiring, met *Ohm* J. Sperling in Marienburg who then travelled with us. I preached to the congregation on October 31st, the 22nd Sunday after Trinity Sunday, and then on Monday, November 1st I served communion. On Sunday my opening remarks were based on Psalm 111:4 and on Monday my opening remarks were based on Ephesians 4:3-4. After experiencing many expressions of love, we left on November 2nd to travel home. May our merciful God unite us in true love, and grant us his peace as is the will of a loving Jesus. That is my heartfelt wish.

November 3, 1779 – I got a letter from the *Ohms* from Nessau, in which they shared that they had arrived home safely and that *Ohm* Abram Schroeder from Graudenz was going to serve the

congregation with baptism and communion. They sounded pleasant and charming about the matter. When they were here, I had asked them to reconcile themselves with *Ohm* Schroeder in the dispute between them regarding mixed marriages.

N.B. Something to think about: The Canton carried out revisions in Tiegenhof regarding the official count of the population. As a result, I received an order from the administrative chamber that I should go and see Jacob Penner in Petershagenfeld, who had been a minister in our congregation, but relinquished the ministerial role and separated himself from our church. That information, as well as that he did not want to pay the annual protection money, can be found in the papers. I was to ask him if he wanted to pay the protection money or not, and then to notify the administrative chamber. Penner did not want to talk about the matter; it weighed on his conscience to pay money in lieu of protection. The next day he was required to appear before the administration and Major Pudlitz and District Administrator Alefeld asked him whether he wanted to conduct himself like a Mennonite and demonstrate that by obediently paying the protection money. They had nothing to do with his separation from the church. If he didn't want to pay, then he and his children would come under the administration of the Canton. It was suggested to him that he straighten things out with me. He came to me enraged, accusing me of going after him, but I assured him that I had not told the administrative chamber anything and did not know who had done so. His disobedience, however, was the cause. Finally, he wanted every person, big or small, to give 2 *Florin* but nothing for the land, however, I told him I could not determine that and would have to consult our ministerial. Thereupon, he departed. Because they did not believe him in the administration, I received an order to come immediately to see the administration, where Major von Pudlitz and *Herr* District Administrator Alefeld questioned me about the matter. I gave everyone present the information but urged them to spare the children because his son Dirk was of age already, and in the coming year wanted to become part of the congregation. They promised that it would not involve the children. A while later, *Ohm* Penner asked me to send him the bill; he wanted to pay everything that was owed from 4 years back.

On November 3rd I received a command at the behest of the governor, that the names of all those who did not want to pay the protection money, should be sent to the administration, including their age and the age of their sons. However, there were no aforementioned cases in our congregation. The Flemish church also received a similar command, because they had many people who had separated from the church, didn't want to pay anything and were unconcerned about it. I wrote a letter of warning, which every deacon had to copy and send around in his area. All those that were still behind in their payment of protection money were to report, whether they would be paying up. Copies of the order to the ministerial, as well as the warning letter can be found with the correspondence from this year.

February 21, 1780 – Johann Busenitz from Marienburg and I again sent a petition to the King by mail. In the petition we persisted, regarding the long promised *Privilegium*. On February 29th we

received another directive from the administration about the order from the chamber, that we hand in all the names of people who, according to the guidelines given, did not want to remain part of our congregation and also did not want to pay the *Cadetten* money. Since our members were already compliant, we did not submit any names.

March 1, 1780 – We received a statement from the King, dated the 27th of February informing us that in his opinion, we should have received the *Privilegium* a long time ago. He would check that out and then we should get our answer. At the beginning of April, we received another letter from the King, that we should demand the *Privilegium* of Grace from Supreme President von Domhart, but he was not willing to grant us freedom from conscription for military service. After that I received an order from the chamber that we should appear before the administrative chamber in Marienwerder on April 18th to receive the *Privilegium* of Grace, which also happened. We appeared in front of the King and his regal entourage and were granted the privileges, but no freedom from conscription and other recruitment for military service. The annual payment of 5,000 *Reichsthaler* remained, which was a great hardship. The *Privilegium* was signed by the King and dated the 29th of March 1780 in Potsdam. It had the cabinet's seal impressed, but in black sealing wax, for the court was in mourning because of the widowed Princess of Prussia, the mother of the Crown Prince.

April 18, 1780 – I submitted a petition to the administrative chamber, on behalf of our congregation [Orlofferfeld Frisian] and that of Tiegenhagen [Flemish], which were flooded because of a breach in the Nogat River, asking to be relieved of this year's payment of the *Cadetten* money. An answer in the form of a refusal arrived and informed us that other congregations could pay for us. As a result, we paid the first quarter portion and thereafter we want to send the King an appeal.

June 18, 1780 – This spring there was unrest in the Stuhm congregation again, because *Ohm* Jacob Siebert had served them with baptism and communion. The people from Rosenkranz were indignant about that and as a result, Jan Classen from Rosenkranz came to see me on June 18th with that information. The *Ohms* from Schweingrub, to my understanding, had not received that and *Ohm* Siebert, without approval for a call to service, was going to start to preach again. They, however, namely the Rosenkraenzer, demanded the freedom to preach in the church building, because they had helped pay for the recent expansion. I pleaded with him for a while, and asked him to remain silent, until I could speak with *Ohm* Siebert, because I wanted to travel to see him, as well as the congregations in Graudenz and Culm, to see if I could encourage them to mediate this situation. He promised me and thereupon I left on June 20th to see *Ohm* Siebert, with whom not much was effective.

June 20, 1780 – On Wednesday, June 20th I, together with our *Ohm* Jan Quiring and *Ohm* Isaac von Duehren, travelled to the Stuhm area, and stopped in at Jan Classen in Rosenkranz, who remained with us. He had to preach, either in the congregation or in front of several brethren in

Rosenkranz, but as long as he saw that we were working on the matter, he would not say anything. We spent the night in Rudnerweide. In the morning we travelled to Graudenz, in the company of Minister *Ohm* Jacob Penner, Deacon Martin Block, and *Vorsinger* [lead singer] Flaming. We spent the night at the home of Bishop *Ohm* Abram Schroeder. The next day we travelled to Przechowka to the Groningen congregation and stayed the night with Bishop *Ohm* Benjamin Wedel.

July 1, 1780 – On Saturday, July 1st, *Ohm* J[an] Quiring, [Deacon] Block and I travelled to Culm to Bishop *Ohm* Cornelius Franzen. *Ohm* von Duehren and the two *Ohms* from Stuhm, stayed there because *Ohm* von Duehren was to preach there the following day, Sunday. I preached to the Culm congregation; the opening remarks were based on 1. John 4:16 and the sermon text was Hebrews 12:12-13. In the afternoon *Ohm* von Duehren, as well as the two *Ohms* from Stuhm, and *Ohm* Wedel came to us and on Monday we journeyed home. *Ohm* Cornel Franz and *Ohm* Clas Franz accompanied us as far as the Graudenz valley. On Tuesday we travelled as far as Stuhm and on Wednesday we arrived home, safe and sound. We had many loving and satisfying encounters and together we arranged for a meeting on July 22nd at Schweingrub. I notified the friends from Nessau to invite them to be present.

On the 7th Sunday after Trinity Sunday [July 9, 1780], Jacob Siemens from Reinland, who was engaged to one of our sisters in the Lord, was accepted into our congregation. He had brought us a written *Attest* from Bishop *Ohm* Dirk Thiessen of the congregation at Tiegenhagen. He was the first person that was accepted while in a standing position; prior to this, persons had to kneel.

July 21, 1780 – On July 21st *Ohm* Johann Bestvater and I travelled to Schweingrub where we met with the *Ohms* from Graudenz and Nessau. On Saturday, July 22nd the meeting took place at the home of Minister *Ohm* Clas Pauls from Rudnerweide. The following congregations and persons were present:

Nessau: Bishop Abram Nickel, Minister Peter Bartel, Minister Jacob Bartel

Culm: Bishop Cornelius Franzen, Minister Clas Franzen

Graudenz: Bishop Abraham Schroeder, Deacon Heinrich Goertz

Kleinwerder: Bishop Jacob Siebert, Minister Johann Sperling

From our congregation [Orlofferfeld]: Bishop Heinrich Donner,
Minister Johann Bestvater

It was decided there that Jan Classen and Franz Pauls, the two elected Ministers from Rosenkranz, as well as their Deacon Franz Goertz should join us, which did happen. After much discussion, they kept insisting that *Ohm* Siebert could not serve communion until he too approved of mixed marriages in his congregation. They did not want to declare invalid the minister role of Jan Classen, and which Franz Pauls had declined on his own. Their wish was to have their service in the church building on the second Sunday, something we outright said no to. Then Jan Classen responded that if we could persuade his brethren to annul his minister

role, he would be content with the decision. They were granted the opportunity to assemble in the church building the next day, Sunday [July 23, 1780]. After the sermon by *Ohm* Clas Franzen, we talked with the Rosenkraenzer, whose thinking remained unchanged, and we disbanded. However, before this happened, I told them that they would need someone who could serve them with baptism and communion. Their response was that they would ask me, but I immediately told them I would have to forgo that, because it would cause division. The bishop from Nessau also turned them down. In the afternoon I got the instruction that I should call the brethren together tomorrow, Monday. At that time, they would submit themselves to a vote by the brethren. If the vote was in favour, they would begin their service in the congregation, if the vote was negative, they would remain quiet and be obedient to the will of the congregation. On Monday morning around 8 o'clock we met in the church building and *Ohm* Cornelis Franzen preached. After the sermon, I presented the brethren with the information on the vote. They were to vote as to whether they wanted the Rosenkraenzer as ministers and deacons, or not, they could do what they wanted. Because we saw that not all the brethren were present, we wanted to gather again in 14 days, so the dispute could come to an end. Many found it to their liking that the unrest was to be discussed, but some, with whom I had had many exchanges, wanted nothing to do with it. We parted again and travelled home in the afternoon.

August 5, 1780 – On August 5th *Ohm* Hans Horn and I drove to Schweingrub where he had heard that many of their brethren were upset with the Rosenkraenzer. Jan Classen was being accused of having beaten a girl, several years ago, who had dropsy and had died. Someone by the name of Unrau was to have said that if Jan Classen received the vote, the church building would soon be on fire and they had collected many similar expressions.

August 6, 1780 – On Sunday, August 6th we travelled to the church where ministers and deacons from all the congregations were meeting. It was thought to be a good move to first ask the Rosenkraenzer after the sermon, if they were going to remain calm. I led the service with opening remarks based on Psalm 85:9 and a sermon text from Luke 18: [9-14] about the Pharisee and the tax collector. After the sermon the brethren were asked to remain in their seats and the Rosenkraenzer had to go to the small room, where an attempt was made to negotiate with them, that they would not preach. Because they failed to be persuaded, we could not progress to the vote, for the brethren were too angry and unruly. The Rosenkraenzer begged me that they would be free to have Jan Classen preach for them in Rosenkranz. They dropped the claim to use the church building, wanted to remain obedient to the congregation and also participate in communion with them. This was presented to the brethren who felt that if the Rosenkraenzer meant what they said, they would give in to their wish. However, Jan Classen had to state that in front of all the brethren, which he did. When someone by the name of Stobbe responded, "You deserve the punishment of the church 10 times over", Jan Classen left and the brethren became rebellious again. I said farewell and travelled to *Ohm* Jacob

Penner at the noon hour. In the evening I got to hear about the most hard-nosed brothers in the group, among them Peter Albrecht, Gert Jantzen, Heinrich Goertz and Jacob Jantzen.

On Monday morning [**August 7, 1780**] I wanted the teaching ministry to take action against the aforementioned Unrau, because of his threat to burn down the church building. I advised all the *Ohms* that they should send orders to those who were named and also Unrau this evening yet, telling them to meet in the church building at 6 o'clock in the morning the next day, to investigate the matter. This did happen. Because I had to travel to Marienwerder, to speak with the chamber director regarding the remittal of the *Cadetten* money, I was not able to be at that meeting with the other *Ohms* at the church, and therefore do not know what was achieved. We received an order from the General Director of the cabinet that we must pay the *Cadetten* money, but we could if we wanted to, send the King a petition to see what the answer might be.

September 4, 1780 – I prepared the petition and mailed it to Berlin on August 12th. On September 4th we received a statement from the King, dated: Netze, the 21st of August, because the King was at a revue of the troops in Silesia. We were denied outright, a waiver regarding the payment of the *Cadetten* money.

September 13, 1780 – I received an order from the royal government in Marienwerder, to provide instruction in our faith for the two daughters of Berend Wichert from Neuteicherwald, and accept them into the congregation. This man, Wichert, was a member in our congregation but he had a Lutheran wife, with whom he had fathered the two daughters. He stopped by to see me often with his two daughters and I was to accept them into the church because under the Prussian government, rules were not always followed. I had refused for the reason that if the mother is Lutheran, according to the royal directive, the daughters must also become Lutheran. Wichert, however, went to the government with his situation and the matter was investigated by a magistrate in Neuteich. The mother, with the two daughters, was questioned by a Lutheran minister and the result of the exam was sent to the government. This has resulted in the instruction that they can be accepted into our congregation. We will plan for this to happen at Pentecost and in the interim, we will be able to observe their way of life.

N.B. Jan Classen from Rosenkranz has started preaching again in October, creating some unrest again. He wrote to me requesting that I serve them with communion. My answer was that it would not happen in fall, but if, in the springtime, the unity within the congregation was being upheld, he could join the believers there, because I do not want to stir up any division.

Printing of the Confession of Faith – It was decided at the meeting in Schweingrub [**July 22, 1780**] that our Confession of Faith should be reprinted, because the supply of copies was depleted in all the congregations. I was asked to look after the arrangements. As a result, I travelled to *Ohm* Gert Wiebe in Ellerswald, who is the Bishop of the Flemish congregation in

Elbing and has always been my dear friend. I asked him to accompany me to the book printer in Elbing because he had arranged the printing of the “*Small Catechism*” as seen on page 20 of the diary [June 6, 1779]. There we approved the details of the printing: 1000 copies would be printed for 120 *Florin* Prussian currency. *Ohm* Wiebe wanted to obtain letter paper for the printing from the paper mill, because it was less expensive there and because using printing paper resulted in poor quality copies.

*Comments made out of love...may they be judged in love:

Hereby, I make a note as a message to my successor in my ministerial position, that he loves all those who seek to follow the Lord Jesus in whatever congregation they wish. In this way, one has great practice in offering an all-encompassing love and is thereby strengthened with peace. I do not pay attention to all the accusations from my dear brethren, who judge my loving relationships and dealings with the Flemish, and blame me for enlarging the church community all too much. They still have no awareness of true Christianity in that they still zealously call for sectarianism. Christ is here! Christ is here! The future days will reveal that the followers of Jesus come from all nations and religions. May God gather all of us together in his mercy. I especially love my congregations with all my heart, and seek to bring them to my Jesus because they have been entrusted to me. However, I also love all souls that are searching for God, and are part of whatever religion they may belong to. I seek to be encouraging towards others in my walk of life, with a steadfast hope grounded on truths found in Paul’s verses in Galatians 5:6 and Galatians 6:15, that those who do the will of God, are brothers of Jesus. May God reveal all the idiosyncrasies in the ignorant souls, so they find reason to learn what it means to be poor in spirit and be saved by His grace. Then they will gladly come down from their lofty heights and assume the penitent stance of the tax collector, coveting His grace. May God allow my hope to be fulfilled. Amen.

January 29, 1781 – Jacob Penner, a minister in the Stuhm congregation died on January 29th. Because they were lacking people in the teaching ministry, a minister election was held the following week. They elected 2 men, one was Gert Jantzen, and the other Tjart. This Jantzen fellow has been very hard on the Rosenkraenzer, as I mentioned on page 30 [August 6, 1780]. May the loving Jesus fill his heart with His meekness, so that he can lead the souls entrusted to him, to the master shepherd and increasingly free himself from all his evil ways. A minister who is still filled with evil willfulness and a strict sense, does much harm to his flock. He cannot properly demonstrate the love of Jesus, the Saviour, through his actions, because he scorns kindness and gentleness. As a result, we have much reason to pray:

Your shield of meekness,
Your image of humility,
Create in me, imprint upon me,
That no anger, nor pride stir.
Nothing else is worthy before you,
Except, one in your image.

March 20, 1781 – I remember that on December 30th, 1780 I sent the royal government a petition on behalf of the Tiegenhagen, Heubuden and our [Orlofffeld] congregations, in which we requested the freedom to have access to the communion wine which we use in the congregations. On March 20th we received a request to send proper certification as to how much wine is being used in the congregations annually. I have prepared and signed that certificate on behalf of *Ohm* Dirk Thiessen from Tiegenhagen, *Ohm* Cornelius Regier from Heubuden and our congregation. It was sent by mail to the government at Marienwerder on April 22nd.

N.B. Franz Philippsen from Altebabke, because of the *Aussentrau*, has not been accepted into the church for a few years, and our ministers considered it important to help him out. As a result, I presented his case to our ministerial on the other Easter day, in order to determine the most reasonable way of helping him. Did we want to give him an *Attest* so that he could be accepted in Danzig or did we want to accept him ourselves? The ministerial chose the latter, but Deacon Hans Quiring disagreed with the decision, although the other deacons did not respond to that. After the sermon, the brethren remained assembled and the matter was presented. Since no conclusion was reached, the matter was postponed to the following Sunday. During the week, deacon Peter Schroeder fomented unrest among his children and Deacon Heinrich Mekelburger and a number of brethren all spoke up, so that still no resolution was reached. Mekelburger, as the real instigator, wanted to assert that the baptizing of youth, who were baptized as children, should not happen anymore. He claimed that all children who were born into a mixed marriage during Polish times, and baptized as infants, should not be accepted, likewise those who would as yet be born of mixed marriages. I responded, that in this matter I would not allow my hands to be tied. Mekelburger, who was filled with hatred towards me, maintained I said this about Berend Wichert's daughters, regarding whom we (see page 31 in the diary [September 13, 1780]) received an order to accept them. This, however, was not the issue, as was also felt by the other *Ohms*. Raging with anger, Meckelburger stirred up more brethren against me, and made accusations that I would accept Wichert's daughters, whether the congregation approved it or not and also accept mixed marriages. After that, 4 brethren, Cornelius Albrecht from Siebenhuben, Franz Penner and Peter Schroeder Junior from Platenhof, and Heinrich Quiring from Reimerswalde, came to see me on the Saturday before Jubilate Sunday [May 6, 1781, third Sunday after Easter], declaring their opposition to both.

On Sunday morning Philippsen came to see me and I heard from him how things were going. I told him I would request an *Attest* for him. I did that after the sermon and presented the matter regarding Wichert's daughters. I also read the order with its recommendation in front of the brethren, who didn't want to have anything to do with accepting them. Wichert was present and wanted to know if their lifestyle was problematic. C[ornelius] Albrecht responded, no, this was something new that should not happen. I told him (Wichert) to immediately go back to the government. Philippsen got an *Attest* for Danzig.

Wichert immediately sent a petition by mail to the government in Marienwerder, on behalf of his daughters. In response, an order was received by me counseling us that we should not let it enter our minds, to act against the order, when we did not have legitimate grounds for doing so. We were instructed to submit our reasons within 8 days. Since we did not have an adequate explanation, we could not submit anything. However, the acceptance of both daughters could not happen this year, because the order arrived too late.

May 20, 1781 – On the morning of Rogate Sunday [a day of penitence and prayer on the fifth Sunday after Easter], I received a letter from *Ohm* Stobbe from Danzig, who didn't really refuse to accept Philippsen but in an unassuming manner, sent him back to us.

I first read the letter for our ministerial and thereafter also for the brethren and finished my presentation with these words. "That is the communication from Danzig from which we can conclude what is in store for us to do." Since I had not asked them a question, they could also not answer. Afterwards I decided to request the ministerial to gather in the church on the next Wednesday in order to discuss what we wanted to do. They all came. The diaconate continued to voice their objections, but we as ministers were in agreement on the matter. The conclusion was to present Philippsen in the future on Ascension Day, and recommend that he should be accepted, which was done. The only question I asked the brethren was whether they had any concern to share about his lifestyle. If there were no concerns, we would accept him over time. No one said anything and so he was presented to the congregation again on the Sunday before Pentecost.

N.B. The timing was good, because *Ohm* Peter Schroeder's son Jacob had been married during the night in Ladekopp to a Lutheran young woman, on the same Sunday. He had already fathered a child with her. However, his parents had dealt with this wrongful act by giving the harlot 1000 *Florin* so that she would not say anything about it. She did remain silent, but he did not break it off and often went to see her at night in Ladekopp, where she was staying with her mother. This had been going on for a long time. I had heard about it, but not enough to know with any certainty. On May 14th in the evening around 10:30 pm, I received a letter from a stranger who immediately disappeared, in which I was informed about Jacob Schroeder's fornication. The letter was not signed. I gave this letter to *Ohm* Peter Schroeder who read it for his son Jacob, who then outright said he would marry the harlot. His parents, as well as his brothers, wanted to support him but that alone did not help. He went ahead and they were secretly married whereupon the eyes of the Schroeder family were opened...

[partial transcription of the illegible water damaged lines on page 36 of the diary]

wie Sch...

gethan, ... die Aussentrau ...

anjetzo trafer ihren Sohn und so wurd ihnen

bange das ihm die Soldaten ...

wuerden, ich ging aber zu ihm ...

mit ihm, da bat er mir ich sollte doch helfen

*das er Mennistisch bleiben koennte welches
ich ihm, auch seinen Eltern ... auch durch
diesen Vorfall, welcher sehr ...
wurde denen widersprechen, der Mund
sehr gestopfet*

...but regarding the baptism, H[einrich] Meikelburger and C[ornelius] Albrecht gathered everything together, what they possibly could. I hope our loving God will hinder them in equal measure, regarding their opposition to the baptism, as it happened with the *Aussentrau*. In his time, he will also grant me peace from all such troublemakers, for I do not want to forgo any of my Jesus' commands in order to please man. I maintain that the command of the Lord Jesus regarding baptism is that because infant baptism isn't scriptural and is not practiced in our congregation, I also cannot accept those that were baptised as infants based on that baptism. It is not the practice in our Mennonite congregations, except in the Kleinwerder congregation which wants to introduce it and cause a stir among our uninformed brethren. May our loving God convert them.

On Trinity Sunday [June 10, 1781], I accepted Franz Philippsen from Altebabke, into our congregation after having been denied for 4 years because of the *Aussentrau*.

[July 15, 1781] – I got another order from the government in Marienwerder, regarding the former issue, in which I would be assessed a penalty of 5 *Reichsthaler* if I did not submit, within 8 days, our reasons for not accepting Wichert's daughters into our congregation. On July 20th, together with *Ohm* Bestvater and Grunau, I prepared a document with the reason, which reads as follows:

Your Royal Majesty, according to your highest command, I submit the reason which is still preventing us from accepting into our congregation, the daughters of B[erend] Wichert from Neuteicherwald. Our inaction is not because of disobedience to your command, but rather only because several members of our congregation cannot reconcile themselves to this. Since the mother is Lutheran, they fear that this will be viewed by the Lutherans as harming their religion and be a detriment for our congregation in the future. This is the reason that, till now, has prevented me from granting the request of the daughters, otherwise I strive to live in full obedience, etc. etc.

On July 15th Minister Cornelius Frantz, Minister Peter Baltzer and Deacon Peter Nickel from the Culm congregation came to see me ...

[partial transcription of the illegible water damaged lines on page 37 of the diary]

... die Glaubens

Bekentnis, welches ist jetzt drucken lassen

... Ohm C[ornelius] Frantz predigte den Tag darauf

Als am 9ten Sonntag nach Trinit[atis] [August 12, 1781] ueber die Worte

...

In the afternoon [August 12, 1781], Minister *Ohm* Steffen Koerber, Minister Heinrich Schroeder and Deacon Heinrich Ewert from the Graudenz congregation, who had been in the Kleinwerder, and were accompanied here by *Ohm* Horn, Siebert and Johann Sperling, met with us. We were coming together because of Wichert's daughters, but it was primarily to discuss baptism and they were all so taken in by *Ohm* Siebert that they approved the acceptance of infant baptism in our congregations. The people from Culm freely conceded that it would not be right and that fear of man alone was the reason. The people from Graudenz stuck to their questioning of whether their youth that were being baptized actually had faith and as a result our baptism was no better than infant baptism. Our *Ohms* and I refuted their argument, so they couldn't argue with it, although they stayed with their opinion. We then parted from each other. May our loving God protect us from a complete separation. Now it appears that our Christianity is in a miserable state. May the Lord guide everything for the best.

August 24, 1781 – On Saint Bartholomew's Feast Day, August 24th Bishop Abraham Nickel and Ministers Zacharias and Jacob Bartel from Nessau came to see us, to pick up the newly printed copies of our Confession of Faith.

August 26, 1781 – On the 11th Sunday after Trinity Sunday *Ohm* Nickel preached a sermon entitled "The Day of Death is better than the Day of Birth" from Ecclesiastes 7:2. The dear man had a beautiful sermon which also will have had a beneficial effect. The day before I received the statement regarding Wichert's daughters which indicated if we would accept these daughters without the knowledge of the royal government or the approval of their mother, it could be to our disadvantage. However, now that we had the approval from both sides, the government is therefore expecting us to accept them. I read this statement in front of our brethren, the *Ohms* from Nessau. Even without requesting their opinion on the matter, it was clear that the people from Nessau were in complete agreement with us regarding baptism and acceptance. On August 27th *Ohm* Hans Horn and I accompanied the Nessau *Ohms* to the Kleinwerder. There they talked with *Ohm* Siebert regarding the Rosenkraenzer, because the latter did not want *Ohm* Siebert to serve them, Jan Classen wanted to assume the role as their bishop. In order to prevent this from happening, *Ohm* Nickel wanted to serve them, but wanted *Ohm* Siebert's consent for that, which he was able to acquire. Then we parted from each other.

August 28, 1781 – The people from Nessau departed from *Ohm* Siebert to travel home and *Ohm* Horn and I did the same. We experienced great callousness from *Ohm* Siebert regarding both mixed marriages and also baptism.

N.B. The letter paper purchased by *Ohm* Gert Wiebe for the printing of the Confession of Faith costs 4 ½ *Florin* Prussian currency per ream of paper [500 sheets] and each unbound copy of the Confession of Faith costs 6 *Groschen* Prussian currency.

The copies were distributed as follows:

The Danzig congregation got	125 copies
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Our congregation [Orlofffeld] got	103 copies
The Kleinwerder congregation got	125 copies
The Stuhm congregation got	125 copies
The Graudenz congregation got	222 copies
The Culm congregation got	125 copies
The Nessau congregation got	125 copies
The Lithuanian congregation got	50 copies
Total	1,000 copies

Our congregation still received 24 copies of the old edition of the bound Confession of Faith from the deceased Rump from Elbing, as a result we didn't take as many copies of the new edition as we were allotted.

[July 29, 1781] – On the 7th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, Anna Martens, a niece of Hans Harms from Orloff, who was part of a mixed marriage and had moved to Wengeln in the Kleinwerder, wanted to be accepted in the congregation again. Upon her persistence, she received an *Attest* for *Ohm* Siebert.

[September 23, 1781] – However, when we held a joint service on the 15th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, she also came and shared that *Ohm* Siebert did not approve, having to serve her in his congregation. He didn't send the document back, however. The old man is pushing his willfulness to the extreme.

I have also heard that there is another conflict regarding the service to the Rosenkraenzer, for a number of people from the Stuhm congregation do not want to allow the Rosenkraenzer to be served communion. I personally oppose the matter, but because *Ohm* Siebert alone wants to be in charge of the governance and service in the Stuhm congregation, may he see to it how the matter is resolved. I only wrote to the Rosenkraenzer suggesting they remain peaceful, even if the others go to the authorities and warned them to be calm and not repay evil with evil.

[September 30, 1781] – On the 16th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, our ministerial decided that I would write to the Kleinwerder ministerial and ask why they did not want to accept Anna Martens into their congregation. If they made their decision because of the *Aussentrau*, then they are making a mistake, since *Ohm* Siebert served all the other congregations which had accepted the *Aussentrau* again, even before us. If, however, they had a grievance against us, then they have an obligation to discuss it with us, which would be more commendable, and brotherly like, than to dissolve our fellowship in this manner. We wanted a reply to this matter. A letter, signed by all the ministers was sent to *Ohm* Allert from Gueldenfeld so that he could present it to the entire ministerial, because if it was sent to *Ohm* Siebert, the other *Ohms* would not get to hear about it. *Ohm* Siebert and the elderly *Ohm* Cornels Albrecht had refused Anna Martens without informing and consulting with the other *Ohms*. Time will determine what kind of an answer we will receive.

October 16, 1781 – We received a letter on October 16th from the Kleinwerder ministerial, in which they requested us to visit them on October 20th, because they would all be meeting with *Ohm* Siebert. The ministerial was not pleased that Anna Martens had been turned away. Anyway, *Ohm* Johann Sperling had become very angry with *Ohm* Siebert about the matter, to the point that he stepped away from the group and wanted to resign from his ministerial position, which he didn't do after being counseled against it. I then travelled with *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau to meet with *Ohm* Siebert, and the other *Ohms*. Together, we discussed at length, the Anna Martens matter, baptism and the acceptance of the Wichert daughters. They could not offer any good contradictory arguments, therefore I suggested to *Ohm* Siebert how absurd it was, that he tried to blacken my name everywhere, with the accusation that I would lead the congregations into misery in the same manner as had happened with the Lithuanians. They themselves had to agree with me, that we had received 4 orders regarding this and the Lithuanians had accepted everything without an order. I stayed overnight with *Ohm* Hans Siebert, and on Sunday morning travelled to the church where *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau preached the sermon. After we discussed the remaining issues with the *Ohms*, then drove as far as *Ohm* Sperling for the night, we travelled home on Monday.

October 30, 1781 – On October 30th I had a visit from *Ohm* Benjamin Wedel, the Bishop of the congregation in Przechowka, and *Ohm* Cornelius Regier, Bishop of the congregation in Heubuden, with whom I have a loving relationship. They also stayed the night with me. Among the heart-to-heart talks we had, was also our conversation about the acceptance of the Wichert daughters and about the baptism, which they asked about. They counseled me not to do it without baptism, and not to turn away or deny such people from other religions, the freedom to come over to ours. They had already heard that some from our congregations disagreed with these decisions, and they wanted to indicate their opposition to this provocation.

December 17, 1781 – On December 17th I received a letter from *Ohm* Gert Wiebe, the Bishop of the congregation at Elbing, in which he inquired about the aforementioned matter. This letter is among the letters I have kept from this year.

N.B. This year we again had to record the names of all Mennonites, in keeping with the method prescribed by the administration, not based on the congregation but according to the administrative district. I submitted this list to the administration on December 7th and have saved a copy of the record keeping methodology.

December 28, 1781 – On December 28th I wrote a letter to Cornels Franz, the Bishop of the congregation in Culm, and asked about refutation of our proposal regarding the acceptance and baptism of family members from other religions. However, I have not received a reply.

February 1, 1782 – On February 1st I wrote to Steffen Koerber, the Bishop of the Montau congregation, asking that they send us the statement opposing my actions, which they had

decided on with *Ohm* Siebert. Last fall, when *Ohm* Siebert had served the congregations in Montau and Culm, he had slandered my name there. The acceptance of the Wichert daughters will bring disaster upon the congregations and they should rebel against me. As a result, they had reached their decision that, if I accept the children, and even through baptism, they would not want to fellowship with me. They didn't make this decision known and *Ohm* Siebert also remained silent, but the people from Nessau told me in fall, because they had heard about it. That is why I wrote the aforementioned letter to the congregation but received no answer. There is no basis for their contradictory stance, and it is against the Word of God.

March 2, 1782 – On March 2nd there was a meeting of the Schweingrub congregation at the home of Deacon Peter Jantzen at Peglau. The unity issue regarding the Rosenkraenzer was dealt with again, because they did not want to follow through with their previous offer. It was rejected then, as indicated on page 30 [August 6, 1780], and the strict brethren also did not want to accept that they be served holy communion separately. Therefore, it was decided in all the congregations that the ministerial that was there, should work with the strict brethren to give in and resolve the issue. This was then to be reported at the general meeting, which was to be held regarding the apportionment of the *Cadetten* money, so that Jan Classen would not introduce himself as bishop on his own accord. *Ohm* Cornelius Grunau and I were at that meeting and presented the matter regarding Wichert's daughters. There was much disagreement, especially from *Ohm* Hans Siebert, who was there in his father's stead and who had already stirred up the other congregations. Their sordid reasons follow. First, they could not disprove my point, that the children would be able to be accepted without baptism, the baptism *Ohm* Siebert fully supported, and yet they should not be accepted. Secondly, they could also not show what harm would result from that. Nevertheless, they wallowed in their hard-headedness, and we could not budge their thinking with all our arguments. I continued to request that they demonstrate that we are in the wrong, using Holy Scripture. They continued to remain silent and thus, we parted. May God navigate everything for the best outcome. Also, *Ohm* Hans Siebert, on behalf of his father, instructed me to accept those in mixed marriages from their congregation, which they wanted to send to me, with attestations. Then they would be recognized as members by them. I would take this under consideration, and advised them, they should reflect on what such disagreement achieved. With the acceptance of family members from other religions and children that were part of mixed marriages, they would also change, because their decisions went against the Word of God. *Ohm* Siebert did his best to serve his congregation entirely on his own, without any assistance. He said, however, that his elderly father had erred on this. It's a miserable thing when one acts in such a rash and inconsiderate manner.

March 13, 1782 – On March 13th I met with our ministerial in my home. Among the various topics of conversation was also the acceptance of Wichert's daughters. Our diaconate opposed the ministers in this matter but could not present a thorough refutation. Finally, H[einrich] Meikelburger said he was otherwise not against it, but failed to understand the baptism. He

would not want to separate himself from us, however, nor from communion. He did not yet know, if he would be prepared to assist me with the water during baptism. I told him, that if he carefully reflected on it, he would probably do it. We parted with heartfelt wishes.

April 30, 1782 – On April 30th Heinrich Mekelburger came to see me and shared the news of great unrest among a number of brethren, regarding the acceptance of Wichert's daughters. His brother, David Mekelburger, was among them.

May 3, 1782 – On May 3rd the new baptismal candidates were scheduled to meet at my home in the morning around 9 o'clock, to receive instruction in faith matters. However, at around half past six in the morning, our Deacon David Mekelburger, Simon Bestvater from Platenhof, and Heinrich Jantzen from Reimerswalde arrived. They had with them Heinrich Nickel, who is well known for his evil lifestyle. First of all, he was divorced from his wife in Rueckenau, was banned from the Elbing congregation, and he had lived like that for many years. Thereafter, he united with the surviving widow of Hans Schmidt, whom he still owes money for the support of the child. Our Deacon Mekelburger comes to me with this person and tries to make me out to be a liar. This person, Nickel, wanted to prove to me, that at the meeting in Schweingrub, I was to have said that the brethren were all in agreement with me. *Ohm* Grunau, however, can testify that that is not the case, and I didn't say anything like that. Finally, they told me that the young women would not be baptized in the church building, for they would be directed to leave. After that they left, and I instructed the youth on the principles of faith. I wrote to our ministerial, asking them to come to meet with me on the morning of May 4th. Jacob Quiring, Heinrich Mekelburger, and David, his brother, came, as well as *Ohm* Grunau and Jan Quiring. I gave David Mekelburger a sharp reprimand, that as a deacon he had acted in bad faith by inciting others, without approaching me before hand. I had called 2 meetings with the ministerial, he didn't come to either, and now, however, he joined with such a scoundrel to make me out to be a liar. He felt very ashamed. I told the other deacons that they should have second thoughts in this matter, because I considered *Ohm* Siebert from the Kleinwerder to be the source of this unrest, but they had all contributed to it, some to a greater extent and others to a lesser extent. I saw David Mekelburger as their leader. Following this, I announced to them, that at this time I would no longer serve baptism or communion, but I would not leave my minister role or the congregation, because I cannot act contrary to my conscience and the Word of God. I would never want to recognize infant baptism as right and proper in our congregation.

May 5, 1782 – I shared the same information with our brethren on the next Sunday, May 5th. Thereupon, Simon Dau from Rothebude, David Pauls from Marienau and Hans Harms from Orlofffeld arose and said it could not happen, that such malicious people be allowed to deal with me in such a way. They would take the matter into their hands. What will come out of that after today, only time will tell. May our loving God have mercy on us all.

May 6, 1782 – On May 6th I wrote to *Ohm* Stobbe in Danzig. There was a meeting on May 6th at Heubuden with all the congregations, the Flemish as well as our congregations [Frisian] regarding the apportionment of the protection money. In our congregation there are 169 *Huben* 16 *Morgen*. There are:

People over 15 years	415
People under 15 years	189
Total	604

Ohm C[ornelius] Grunau and Jan Quiring travelled to bring the collection money to the poor people in Kleinsee, not far from Schwetz. We had set out 15 *Groschen* Prussian currency per *Hube* for that, and they got a total of 109 *Florin*.

[May 12, 1782] – On the Sunday before Pentecost, Simon Dau from Rohtebude came to the room for the *Ohms* before the sermon *and* asked about the state of the unrest regarding the acceptance of the young women and baptism. On behalf of a number of brethren, he demanded that the names of the unruly brethren be announced, so that the reasons for their disagreements could be heard, because it goes against the canons of our faith. I replied that one would be able to hear from them after the holy days, and he was satisfied with that. This year we are paying a total of 711 *Florin* 28 *Groschen* of *Cadetten* money.

[May 26, 1782] – On the Sunday after Pentecost [Trinity Sunday], I talked with our ministerial about having the deacons announce the names of the brethren, so that we could have a meeting in the church on May 30th to discuss the unrest in our congregation. This did indeed happen.

I made the presentation (after we had sung the hymn: “*God is a God of Love*” [“*Gott ist ein Gott der Liebe*”]) and reminded the brethren to examine the reason for the unrest. The issue was about baptism as the focal point of our faith. Once again, I had heard that among the Mennonites a misconception had arisen, namely, that infant baptism was acceptable and valid in the congregation. I shared the letters I had received from *Ohm* Isaac Stobbe and *Ohm* Isaac von Duehren from Danzig, who were in total agreement with me. The unruly brethren could not thoroughly prove their points regarding infant baptism and the exclusion of family members of other religions, nor had anything to say about the young women. Therefore, I ended the meeting with an admonition to those brethren who were not in agreement with us regarding the confession of faith, that they remain calm and create no further disturbances, when we proceed with the acceptance of the Wichert daughters. After the singing of the hymn, “*Lord, Great is Your Faithfulness*” [“*Herr deine Treue ist sehr gross*”], we then parted.

[June 2, 1782] – On the following Sunday which was the first Sunday after Trinity Sunday, I introduced the youth to the brethren, the Wichert daughters were included among them. I announced that the youth should meet at the church the following Saturday. In response to that, our Deacons Jacob Quiring, Heinrich Mekelburger, David Mekelburger and Hans Quiring came to see me the next day, Monday; the elderly Peter Schroeder, however, sent his thoughts

in writing. These men pointed out to me that David Mekelburger and Simon Bestvater from Platenhof had been to see *Ohm* Siebert in the Kleinwerder last Friday, who was very much against me, and advised them to speak with the other congregations. I sent for *Ohm* Cornelius Grunau and we told them, they could do whatever they wished, but we would not allow ourselves to be swayed by all the Prussian congregations, for they all embraced our faith teachings. They, as our deacons, would make wiser choices if they were united with us, rather than further emboldening the unruly brethren and providing support for them. They maintained that they had more questions and as a result had further meetings with those brethren and also had been to see *Ohm* Siebert again.

June 7, 1782 – On June 7th Simon Bestvater from Platenhof, Heinrich Jantzen from Reimerswalde, Heinrich Schroeder from Orloff, and Jacob Nickel from Tiegerweide came to see me, and wanted me to postpone the meeting with the youth. They wanted to consult with the royal government in Marienwerder, regarding the baptism, as well as the acceptance of the youth. I responded that I would not postpone it, for tomorrow I would question them about the catechism. The day after tomorrow, Sunday, they would be asked about their confession of faith, so that they could be affirmed. Thus, I reminded them that they should carefully rethink what they were doing, in seeking counsel from the authorities regarding the revival of their faith. The royal government would then become aware of the foolish and ignorant Mennonites. They parted in anger.

[June 9, 1782] – On the second Sunday after Trinity Sunday, I examined the youth on the articles of faith, which they answered in the affirmative. Thereupon, I announced that I would serve them with baptism on the following Sunday. On the same Sunday, David Mekelburger and Cornelius Albrecht travelled to Schweingrub to talk with *Ohm* Jacob Siebert, who was serving there. On Thursday Mekelburger brought me the message that I was supposed to postpone the baptism awhile. *Ohm* Siebert had sent someone to the Graudenz and Culm congregations in order to schedule a meeting regarding this issue. I responded that it was too late to postpone it, and at this time I would be proceeding with the baptism. The meeting could happen thereafter, because, unfortunately, I had already become aware of their opinions in the spring (page 41 of the diary [March 2, 1782]).

[June 16, 1782] – On the third Sunday after Trinity Sunday, I baptized the youth, among them were Wichert's both daughters (see page 42 in the diary [March 13, 1782]). Two young men, whose names I already presented and who had been present at the church, were left behind after some angry words. One young woman, Maria Jantzen, who was staying at Franz Penner from Platenhof, had not come to the church on Saturday. On Sunday, when I was examining the candidates' confession of faith, she came, crying and begging to still be accepted with the others. This did happen, but Franz Penner was greatly displeased, because she had not mentioned it to him at all. May the Lord mercifully forgive these jealous people for all this.

I received a message that the *Ohms* from the upper congregations were to meet on Sunday in Schweingrub, which did happen. They, however, did not give me any information about it. On Monday, David Mekelburger and his wife travelled to Schweingrub, but came back the same evening. On Tuesday morning he travelled to Schweingrub again, this time with Heinrich Jantzen from Reimerswalde and Simon Bestvater from Platenhof. *Ohm* Hans Siebert from the Kleinwerder had also been there. Together with the people from Graudenz and Culm, they had made the decision to come to our congregation on July 3rd and conduct a meeting (to unseat me as Bishop), which *Ohm* Hans Siebert shared with me in writing (I, however, did not reply to H. Siebert). Every reasonable person would easily recognize how befitting it is, to have a meeting in our church, without discussing it ahead of time with our ministerial. May the Lord grant me patience; I am not worried about being unseated.

June 30, 1782 – On June 30th I received a note from *Ohm* Dirk Thiessen from Petershagen, asking me to come to the home of *Ohm* David Schultz in Petershagen on July 4th, because a number of Flemish *Ohms* would be there and they were eager to hear about the situation in the congregation. They feared that our unruly brethren would affect our religious freedom.

July 3, 1782 – On July 3rd the following people came to see me: Bishop Hans Siebert and Deacon Peter Funk from the Kleinwerder, Minister Clas Pauls and Deacon Salomon Ediger from Schweingrub, Bishop Steffen Kerber and Minister ____ [Hans] Kopper from Graudenz and Deacon Willem Cornelsen from Culm. We discussed the acceptance of family members from other religions and the baptism, as practiced according to the Holy Scriptures. They did not want to approve it but could not offer adequate evidence to the contrary. Their only request was that it not happen anymore. Our teaching ministry, however, was not willing to consent to that, and maintained that we would continue to accept those who obtained the freedom to do so, and whose lifestyle was beyond reproach. They departed, but the two from Schweingrub stayed for the night.

July 4, 1782 – On the morning of July 4th all the *Ohms* gathered at the home of *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau for a meal and then parted in love. After that I travelled to Jacob Schultz in Petershagen, where Bishop Gert Wiebe from Elbing, Cornelius Regier from Heubuden and D[irk] Thiessen from Petershagen were present. They were concerned that our religious freedom would be negatively impacted, but I felt that the opposite was true. I assured them that we would be vigilant about that, which was their earnest request. Our deacons and unruly brethren have done so much to obstruct it but devised nothing and I hope will not carry out anything in the future. We wondered why the *Ohms* had come such a long way for so little benefit. I thought that if they came at the behest of the unruly brethren, they would request a meeting, but there was no mention of one, and we also remained silent about it. Since we were of the same mind about the lack of need for a meeting, it was good that no mention was made of it. I had never imagined that there could be so little scholarship among the ministers in the congregations, something that grieves me deeply. I see this incident as an example of that. God

help us. Our deacons and their followers did not come to see us, and so I do not know why they requested the other *Ohms* to come here. That is how man becomes disoriented, when one is shamed by God's commands.

I have also become aware that some of our unruly brethren have gone to the administration and reported me regarding the baptism. The Evangelical Lutheran priest from Ladekopp has threatened to report to the royal government, that I held in contempt their baptism. I do not have fear of that yet, but rather live in the hope that the Lord Jesus will preserve his commands from all fallacious slanderers. What our deacons and brethren are doing is bad enough, that they are thus blaspheming their own religion. May our loving God call them to repentance. At the departure of these other *Ohms*, I suggested that they should have more reverence and higher regard for the commands of Jesus, and not speak so unmindfully about baptism, as had been done till now. This creates ill feelings among members in the congregation and would entail many and serious responsibilities. Their request was that we still remain in a loving relationship together.

Ohm Hans Siebert also informed me that minister *Ohm* Johann Sperling from the Kleinwerder was very angry with Bishop Jacob Siebert, to the point that he renounced his ministerial position for a period of time. I wrote him about this and counseled him against stepping away from his ministerial role.

The reason for the dispute was as follows: *Ohm* Jacob Siebert announced to his ministerial, that the *Ohms* from all the congregations would come to see me and said that this time *Ohm* Donner could be forgiven for baptizing and accepting the young women. However, an end needs to be made of this, he must never to do that again. *Ohm* Sperling responded that it was not right to put an end to it in this way. If the deacons in the Grosswerder had not been encouraged by those from our area, then the unrest there would have been resolved. *Ohm* Siebert accused him of lying. *Ohm* Sperling replied, that if he did indeed lie, then he was not fit to serve in his ministerial position. Therefore, he would relinquish his position until his words had been substantiated.

Last year, on December 11th, 1781, we received the formal decision from the government in Marienwerder, that we are free to obtain the communion wine for our churches from Danzig. We always had to contact the administrative authority in Alt Schottland and they had to give us a note of approval.

The congregation in Tiegenhagen had a bill for 240 *Stof* [Stauf] annually.

The congregation in Orloff had a bill for 80 *Stof* [Stauf] annually.

The congregation in Heubuden had a bill for 73 *Stof* [Stauf] annually.

This freedom to acquire the wine from Danzig without authorization, came as a result of the petition sent to the government, as seen on page 33 of the diary [March 20, 1781].

[July 28, 1782] – On the 9th Sunday after Trinity Sunday we celebrated communion, but because the unruly brethren had talked about it with many people, and there were also a number of incidents, we had somewhat over half the people attending. The deacons were all absent and

so *Ohm* Bestvater, Grunau, Horn and J[an] Quiring took the chalice around. May the Lord enlighten the unknowing and convert the hardened souls.

August 2, 1782 – On August 2nd I received an order from the director of the land administrative court in Marienburg that I should come to see him on the morning of September 2nd, to discuss and explain the baptism of Wichert’s daughters. I travelled to see him at the scheduled time, and he asked me if I had served two Lutheran young women with a Mennonite baptism and accepted them into the congregation. I answered, “Yes”. He asked, “For what reason?” I replied, “Because I had a command to do so.” Thereupon, I showed him the directives and wanted to know who my complainant was, but he didn’t want to name names. Then, following administrative procedure, he recorded all the details as given, and I added my signature below it. After that he asked me, “In which church were the children baptized as infants?” I answered, “In the Lutheran.” Thereafter, he said, “So, as children they were baptized in the Lutheran Church and now, they have been accepted through Mennonite baptism?” I responded, “Yes”. To that he said, “Thus, the matter is quite correct; who has anything to add to that.” Then he addressed me, “My dear man, I want to caution him to follow this advice. He must not accept family members from other religions before they are 14 years old. Once he is 14 years old, he should receive instruction and be accepted for baptism, and no one can touch him.” I replied, “I will not accept anyone without an order.” He said, “Good then, but it is not necessary, if he follows my advice, he will not err.” I then departed.

This matter was reported to the royal government in Marienwerder by the Lutheran Minister Betsel from Ladekopp, after being incited by our brethren. That led the director in Marienburg to send me an order to appear there. The actions of some Mennonites are so absurd, that they willingly want to bring misfortune upon me. My loving God will protect me from that.

September 6, 1782 – I mailed the royal government in Marienwerder a chronicle, in which I continued to address the church administrative order. The Lutheran priest from Ladekopp has been a source of much grief for me, in the copulation of Jacob Schroeder, as I described on page 35 of the diary [May 20, 1781], as well as the acceptance of Wichert’s daughters. As I mentioned earlier, he made an accusation about that. I think the minister will be ordered to be quiet and behave himself.

N.B. The minister will soon be questioned, if I would make another report.

September 15, 1782 – I received a letter from Leonhard Martens from Schwansdorf, the father of Anna Martens, who was in a mixed marriage and was accepted into our congregation. *Ohm* Grunau and I travelled to the Kleinwerder last fall for this reason, as seen on pages 38 [July 29, 1781] and 39 [September 30, 1781] in the diary. This Martens notified me that *Ohm* Siebert had said that his daughter had been refused communion. As a result, I wrote to the ministerial in the Kleinwerder and requested a reply that same week. On September 26th I received a response from *Ohm* Dirk Allert telling me that Anna Martens, furthermore, would be recognized as a *Mitschwester*. *Ohm* Hans Siebert apologized that his elderly father, *Ohm* Jacob

Siebert, had refused her without his knowledge. Because my letter was somewhat harsh in tone, *Ohm* Hans Siebert was filled with indignation towards me. The *Ohms* asked me to come there, to rectify the matter. I told them that I didn't feel it was necessary. I could prove to them that *Ohm* Hans Siebert had stirred up the unrest because of the baptism and confused all the congregations, so, therefore, I did not write anything that was untrue. If I find it to be useful, I will come there and lay bare all things before everyone's eyes, with *Ohm* H[ans] Siebert present, for I have no fear of him. I can show him that he still pays attention to the unrest. I wish he would recognize how badly he has conducted himself.

[October 6, 1782] – On the 19th Sunday after Trinity Sunday we celebrated communion. The two Deacons, Peter Schroeder and Jacob Quiring, were also present, because I had discussed with them ahead of time, that they had not carried out their role as deacons in a rightful manner. The deacon role included serving at the communion table, because the Apostle Peter did not view it as a good thing for the ministers to be serving at the communion table. Therefore, he chose deacons for that task according to [Acts] 6: 1-7. Thus, they would do well, not to refrain from serving at communion, though the other deacons were still not present.

N.B. I also received information that the Flemish congregation in Tiegenhagen had made the decision, henceforth, not to accept into their congregation, anyone from our congregation. *Ohm* Grunau rode on horseback to see *Ohm* Thiessen, and talk with him about that, because two people from our congregation had become engaged to their members, and also wanted to transfer to their congregation. *Ohm* Thiessen, however, renounced that. He objected, primarily because we had seen fit to approve the *Aussentrau* again. The real reason, however, is that they still hold firm to rebaptism and because they cannot do that to our members at this time, they would rather just not accept them. How amiss this stance is, can be seen in this, that in former days the convention was that when a member of their congregation married a family member from another religion, he had to bring that person to their congregation and the wrongdoing is forgiven. According to this stance, however, a member of theirs who chooses to marry one of ours, is totally rejected and thereby we are looked upon as worse than the Catholics or persons from other religions, which is downright heartbreaking. I have written about this to Bishop Gert Wiebe from the Elbing congregation because I had heard that he and C[ornels] Regier from Heubuden do not yet concur with this decision. I also wrote to C[ornels] Regier, who then warmly responded, and disagreed with this statement. He also had written to *Ohm* D[irk] Thiessen about it.

I wrote to *Ohm* Thiessen again and identified the negative consequences that would come out of that stance. I suggested 3 possible options and asked him to choose one of them: Either he should accept our member and we would send along an *Attest*, or if both members of the couple wanted to remain part of their respective congregations, then we could marry them jointly, or they would have to send an *Attest* for their member, and we would accept them in our congregation. (*Ohm* Thiessen had already refused the *Attest*.) His answer to me was that he wanted to cover up this issue, but he did send an *Attest* for his member, Wieler.

November 5, 1782 – I wrote to *Ohm* C[ornels] Regier from Heubuden and asked him if he would accept Jacob Ketler from our congregation, who, because of his marriage, had submitted his name for membership. He answered that *Ohm* Thiessen had requested him to accept Ketler, because he couldn't, due to several hard-nosed brethren and *Ohms*. Therefore, he wanted to accept him when he brought an *Attest*. Ketler then came and picked up the *Attest* from me and was accepted into the Heubuden congregation.

We accepted the Heinrich Wieler from Haberhorst, who is engaged to one of our sisters and therefore the dispute is resolved. The stubborn Flemish *Ohms* from the Ladekopp sector, who wanted to force it through, got no support from the people of Heubuden, however, they must recognize Ketler, who was accepted at Heubuden, as a brother.

This year has now passed with its many times of distress and adversity. It has brought me much grief, that our deacons, especially the two Mekelburgers in our congregation, have confused so many innocent souls and caused them to mistrust me. That the ministers from other congregations, particularly Hans Siebert from the Kleinwerder, were so misguided about the main tenet of our faith, namely baptism, and proclaimed me as a re-baptizer, one can easily imagine. I could not proceed in any other way, but to follow the Word of God and my conscience and am firmly convinced that it cannot be different. So, I have, despite all the disagreement, carried it out. My enemies, though, do not rest, but continue to seek to bring me down, one way or another. I hold fast to my motto which is taken from Psalm 13: [5]-6 and reads:

*I have trusted in thy mercy; My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me. Amen.*

April 1783 – In the month of April, two men from the so-called Hutterian Brethren, whose congregation was located in *Klein Russland* [Little Russia] in Wischenka came to see Gert Wiebe in Ellerswald. I was notified that they would be in Rosenort on May 5th, and Gert Wiebe requested that I come there. I drove there with *Ohm* Jan Quiring and met them at the home of *Ohm* Cornels Warkentin. The one, named Joseph Mueller, was a Minister, the other was only a lay person and was named Christian Hoffer. Joseph preached in Rosenort on May 6th, and in Thiensdorf on May 11th. On May 14th he wanted to preach at Heubuden for their prayer service. I drove there with *Ohm* Jan Quiring, and we were present for his sermon. He preached from Joel 2: 12-13. We invited him to come with us, which he then did.

[May 18, 1783] - On Cantate Sunday [the fourth Sunday after Easter], he [Joseph Mueller] preached a particularly edifying sermon in our congregation, based on Ephesians 4:1-2. On Tuesday I brought him back to *Ohm* Cornels Regier at the Gurcke [Heubuden], from where he wanted to travel home. They had come on foot, but because they acquired a number of books and hand tools, they bought themselves a small wagon and one horse and planned to drive. This congregation was from Siebenbuergen, was scattered in 1767, and settled in the Wallachia region. They were interrupted by war in 1770, causing them to move abroad to the estate of

Count Romanov. They espouse a community of goods, otherwise their faith teachings were similar to ours. Joseph Mueller was a rather loving and gentle man, a man firmly grounded in the truth; their dealings were uplifting and I have described their departure from the papacy.

June 13, 1783 – On June 13th *Ohm* Johann Sperling and Jan Pauls, both from the Kleinwerder, came with a request, on behalf of the entire ministerial, to serve them with baptism and communion, because the elderly *Ohm* Jacob Siebert was no longer capable. The disagreement regarding baptism had created a rift between *Ohm* Hans Siebert and myself, and so they requested I come earlier and reconcile with him. That happened on June 20th in the presence of their ministerial. The dispute between *Ohm* H[ans] Siebert and myself arose from the letter I wrote regarding what the person from Ladekopp had written to the Kleinwerder ministerial, and in which I assigned the responsibility for the unrest to both *Ohm* Sieberts. I used a number of pointed expressions which *Ohm* Siebert resented. After I explained myself, the matter was soon dealt with.

[June 29, 1783] – We discussed that I would come on the 2nd Sunday after Trinity Sunday and serve their youth with baptism. Therefore, I travelled there with *Ohm* Peter Schroeder and on Saturday I examined the youth on the articles of faith, which they answered in the affirmative. The next day, the 2nd Sunday after Trinity Sunday, I baptized the youth in Thiensdorf, 32 was the total number.

[July 13, 1783] – On the 4th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, I travelled to the Kleinwerder with *Ohm* Hans Horn and served the congregation with communion. At the same occasion, a minister election was held. Four candidates were nominated:

Cornelius Philippsen from Markushof	108
Peter Grunau from Gueldenfeld	77
Hans Quiring from Kampenau	49
Wilhelm Froese from Thiensdorf	54

Elected were Cornelius Philippsen with 108 votes, and Peter Grunau with 77 votes. May the Lord Jesus endow them with wisdom from heaven above, so that they can fulfill their calling, to the honour of God and the salvation of the congregation.

Something more to remember: Abraham Krueger from long Horst [Neulanghorst] was engaged to a Flemish young woman in 1776 and married in our congregation. Because it was later discovered that she had sexual intercourse before marriage, he was banned from our congregation, and she was banned from the Flemish congregation as well. That was their situation until 1783, when she became very sick and in response to her urgent pleas, was accepted, while lying in bed, by the Flemish *Ohms*. As a result, he vowed that he wanted to go over to the Flemish congregation also. Because he remained under a ban from our congregation, however, it became an issue of concern for the Flemish. We then offered to, either first accept A[braham] Krueger in our congregation and send him to them with an *Attest*,

or, release him from the ban in the presence of the brethren and give him a written testimony from our congregation. They chose the latter. Therefore, on the 4th Sunday after Trinity Sunday [July 13, 1783], his situation was presented, he was released from the ban, and then moved over to the congregation in Rosenort.

August 12, 1783 – On August 12th *Ohm* Hans Siebert and *Ohm* Johann Sperling from the Kleinwerder, together with two *Ohms* by the name of Rosenfelder from Lithuania, came to see us. They stayed with me for the night. We had many conversations about our confession and our baptism. The two Lithuanians erred greatly on this issue. They left the next day.

N.B. On July 16th we commanded Heinrich von Riesen and Peter Nickel from Altendorf to appear before our ministerial, because there was deep disagreement between them. The unity was restored, and the settlement was confirmed in writing, which they also had to sign. The settlement can be found in the church records.

This year we received an order from the government not to marry any widow or widower until we had an *Attest*, showing the appropriate distribution of the inheritance for underage heirs. If there are no underage heirs, an *Attest* is not necessary.

September 1783 – In the month of September, on 3 consecutive Sundays I presented a warning to those who were in the arrears in the payment of the protection money. They had until Michaelmas [September 29] to come to terms with that, otherwise it would be handed over to the administrative officials. I sent a letter of warning around in the Elbing area.

[October 12, 1783] – On the 17th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, we celebrated communion. Because the *Ohms* from Nessau were aware of this, Bishop *Ohm* Abram Nickel and Minister Zacharias Bartel, accompanied by Minister Clas Pauls from the Stuhm congregation came, and together we celebrated holy communion in remembrance of the love of Jesus.

[October 19, 1783] – On the 18th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, I served the Kleinwerder congregation with holy communion. Because Bishop *Ohm* Jacob Ewert from the Stuhm congregation was aware that I would be serving there, he also joined us and enjoyed the Love Feast of the Lord Jesus Christ with us. How wonderfully God directs everything. Before, no congregation wanted to have fellowship with me, because I had accepted Wichert's daughters. Now even the bishops of other congregations came and participated in holy communion with me. God, in his great mercy, takes care of his own, and puts to shame the counsel of the enemy. Alas! When we trust God and obey his Word, we will always enjoy his caring presence, as I have experienced with abundance. The Lord be praised forevermore.

November 2, 1783 – On the 20th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, Heinrich von Barga from Leske, who was Flemish and was engaged to Katarina Spent from our congregation, brought me an

Attest from the Heubuden congregation, and signed by their ministerial. He requested to become a member in our congregation. Our ministerial viewed it as inappropriate to accept a Flemish believer, coming to us with such a valid *Attest*, in the usual manner. Therefore, I read the *Attest* for the brethren, and announced that from now on, they were to recognize Heinrich von Barga as a brother of our congregation.

During the fall, unrest arose again in the Kleinwerder congregation, regarding the acceptance and baptism of family members from other religions. Even though the two Siebert *Ohms* could not take their revenge out on me or put me to shame regarding the acceptance of Wichert's daughters, they did not rest, but agitated their friends and brothers regarding this issue. They got great support from the Lithuanian congregation. In the month of October, this congregation sent a letter to all congregations demanding that the *Aussentrau* be declared invalid, and that none of the children of mixed marriages be accepted into the congregation. According to their conversation, re-baptizing was not to become the practice. (If the churches would not comply, they wanted to report it immediately to their government in Marienburg.) This letter, which I kept, is a real disgrace, as seen through the eyes of all true Mennonites, but highly praised by *Ohm* Hans Siebert and his cohorts. The unruly brethren immediately wanted to force their ministerial to announce on the coming Sunday, that nobody was to be accepted into their congregation. Since the ministerial did not want to approve it, they immediately threatened to travel to the government in Marienwerder, to settle the issue there, and forbid us from accepting the children of mixed marriages.

The Kleinwerder ministerial decided to plan for a meeting in Schweingrub on December 1st. That calmed the unruly group until then, a group that consisted of 40 people. The rebels were primarily members of the Siebert families, who stirred up many of their friends. *Ohm* Hans Siebert, whom I have always seen as the instigator of the unrest, again showed himself as that. He took the shameful letter from Lithuania, and travelled to *Ohm* Koerber in Graudenz, in order to gain more followers, no doubt. I hope that the Lord will reveal all their attacks, as he showed them a year ago. I lament that the other *Ohms* and the first time newly elected ones, have to be in their positions at a time of such conflict. If both *Ohm* Sieberts did not add to the unrest, it would be possible to quell it, as happened in our congregation. Now, this could very well result in a division in our congregations. The other *Ohms* are completely in opposition to the *Ohm* Sieberts, and are having to endure suffering brought on by the rebels. May the Lord grant us much patience and hope, and may he continue to keep his word in his mercy.

[December 1, 1783] - The aforementioned meeting has gone ahead. Our ministerial thought it wise to stay home and send our thoughts in writing. We knew that four of the rebels from the Kleinwerder, among them Jacob Siebert Junior, were attending and we wanted nothing to do with those people, who had neither faith nor a conscience. *Ohm* Hans Siebert preached the day before the meeting. After the sermon, *Ohm* Ewert presented the issue to the brethren, portraying it in the most reckless way. Afterwards, his brother Jacob Siebert with his cohorts,

gained a great following in the Stuhm congregation. *Ohm* Johann Sperling travelled to the meeting with *Ohm* Peter Grunau, and brought the message from us, and also had with him the messages from all the Flemish congregations in Elbing, Tiegenhagen, Heubuden and Kunpat [Deutsch Konopat] (I have copies of all the messages). All these messages were actually warnings not to go to the government with this matter. *Ohm* Sperling reported to me that *Ohm* Hans Siebert, together with his brother Jacob, were the leaders. After much discussion, the congregations decided amongst themselves that the *Aussentrau* should be valid. However, any children from a mixed marriage should not be accepted. They have drawn this up in writing, and approximately 300 brethren signed it. *Ohm* Sperling got them to agree to also have a meeting with the Flemish congregations, once the roads were frozen and usable in winter. It is impossible to complain enough about the miserable state of affairs caused by the Sieberts. They are confusing so many souls by asserting their rigid, incomprehensible sense, and creating a deteriorating situation. Even then, it will be of no benefit to them, because who cannot see that this directive to repudiate the children of mixed marriages goes against reason and Holy Scripture, according to 1. Corinthians 9: 7-8. I also got the news from *Ohm* Sperling, that Jan Classen from Rosenkranz had posed as bishop, served communion, and was also going to continue with baptism.

The presentation by Jacob Ewert to his congregation in Schweingrub (which I reported on earlier) began with the following: “Brothers, what do you think about re-baptizing? Do you want to stand with the re-baptizers?” Thereupon everyone shouted “No”!

Oh! What a dreadful question from a bishop. Is that not blaspheming the Gospel of Jesus? May the Lord enlighten them.

January 6, 1784 – On January 6th *Ohm* Johann Sperling came to see me with the message that it was decided that a meeting would be held with all Frisian and Flemish congregations in the Kleinwerder. I was to notify the Flemish congregations, and those from Danzig and Nessau. The meeting was to happen on January 23rd. I immediately informed Danzig, Nessau, and all the Flemish congregations.

January 22, 1784 – On January 22nd *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau and I travelled to the Kleinwerder. According to the previous information, the meeting was at the home of *Ohm* Hans Siebert in Markushof. We met *Ohms* there from all the congregations. The Flemish included Bishop Gert Wiebe from Elbing, and Minister Franz Friesen. There were two Deacons from Culm: Willem Cornelsen and Hans Unrau. From Graudenz there were Bishop Steffen Koerber and Minister ____ [Hans] Kopper. From Stuhm there were Bishop Jacob Ewert and Minister Gert Jantz. From Nessau there were Peter and Jacob Bartel, both Ministers. The four deputy brothers from the Kleinwerder congregation were also there, namely Jacob Siebert Junior from Krebswalde, Peter Nickel from Markushof, Willem Janzen from Gueldenfeld, and Franz Froese from Stalle. In addition, there were 12 other brethren who cheered on *Ohm* Siebert. Our congregation was represented by Simon Dau from Rohtebude, together with his father-in-law Cornelius Funk

from Schwansdorf, who remained neutral. The other congregations who were not represented in person, had sent their thoughts in writing.

Our congregations in West Prussia supported the directive. They wanted the government to strictly forbid anyone the freedom to join with our religion. We and the Flemish and those from Danzig and Nessau were opposed. Because they had already presented their viewpoint to their congregations, and there would otherwise be no peace and security, they did not want to allow our presentations to be heard, no matter how grounded they were. They just said that their congregations didn't want anything different.

I explained myself in the following way: If they wanted to introduce such a directive into their congregations, and lock the doors to keep others out, then they would get their way. However, we could not see ourselves, unnecessarily enacting such a rule. It would be a different matter, if the king ordered this restriction, but since he has graciously given us the freedom to practice our religion, why wouldn't we take advantage of that? And thus, after their confession of faith, from those who have the freedom to do so, and whose lifestyle presents no concern, we should be able to baptize them and accept them into the church. We wanted to allow them to do what they considered was best for them. As far as using their unwritten directive as a method of coercion, imposed by the government, they should think of us as their stiffest opponents. We would fall in with them on one account; we asked them to allow us to carry on unhindered.

Steffen Koerber, who was very unreasonable in this matter, and worked tenaciously to defend child baptism, answered me, "It probably will not change. You must either be for us or against us." I replied, "We have spoken our mind, now do what you want."

I have recorded the new teaching in the catechism, in the church register.

Jacob Siebert Junior became rather furious and spoke in a manner, which caused Gert Wiebe to tell him, that it would be better if he didn't call himself a Mennonite. Near the end of the evening Jacob Siebert verbally attacked the other four Ministers, Johann Sperling, Dirk Allert, Peter Grunau, Cornelis Philippsen, and Deacon Johann Grunau, with his angry, abusive words. Yes, he even talked about removing them from their positions. I left amid this turmoil, because it appeared to me the meeting was going badly.

From what I heard later no firm decision was apparently reached. The next day, Saturday, we drove home and at J[ohann] Sperling's home, we met C[ornelius] Funk from Schwansdorf who listened to everything, and was unhappy about the whole thing. It was decided that he, together with some of the impartial brethren would appear in front of the *Ohms* before the sermon, the next day, Sunday morning. First of all, they would make public Jacob Siebert's unfair treatment of the *Ohms*, and second, end with the announcement that no decision about non-acceptance had been reached.

This man, C[ornelius] Funk, took Hans Penner from Krebswalde, C[ornelius] Ketler from Thiergartsfelde, and the elderly Heinrich Janzen from Wengeln with him, and they went to the *Ohms'* room before the sermon. There they found the *Ohms* from the northern congregations,

and *Ohm* Koerber, who wanted to preach. Cornelis Funk, who is a very humble man, spoke up and complained about the ugly situation, which he experienced at the meeting on Friday. He pleaded, that if the Siebert *Ohms* had anything against *Ohm* Sperling and the others, they should come to an agreement, without the men having to deal with the malice from the brethren. He also insisted that, after the sermon, no mention be made of the exclusion of family members from other religions, and also, no mention of the children of mixed marriages. However, they asked not only on their behalf, but also many others, that since there was absolutely no urgency, at this time, to pause their decision, or there would be dissent.

When he heard this, *Ohm* Hans Siebert became terribly angry (because they had decided to present the directive to the brethren after the sermon) and started to complain with outrage. *Ohm* Steffen Koerber abandoned his preaching, and because he had become so furious, he said, "Now, sabres would be useful to strike at the *Ohms*." However, the brethren, as well as *Ohm* Sperling, refuted everything in their appeal. Finally, *Ohm* H[ans] Siebert pledged that the directive should not be made public. Because *Ohm* S[teffen] Koerber did not want to preach, another Minister, [Hans] Kopper, preached and the service was completed. Nothing was presented to the brethren at that time, but it happened the next day.

1783 – N.B. Something to think about. On December 30th I sent a letter of inquiry to the government, asking them how we should deal with the issue of the acceptance of children born of the *Aussentrau*.

January 24, 1784 – I received the answer on January 24th. I was free to accept the women, but in the case of a man, I was to report it ahead of time, that I wanted to accept a family member from another religion. From that we can conclude, that the freedom to accept family members from other religions exists, when it is done with the knowledge of the government.

[March 7, 1784] – On Reminiscere Sunday ["Remember"; the second Sunday in Lent], *Ohm* Hans Horn preached in the Kleinwerder congregation. I had sent along the ordinance regarding the acceptance of children from mixed marriages, which he showed to their ministerial. *Ohm* Hans Siebert was very upset, and finally had said: "This way the acceptance should probably be of no concern, if only the Crown Prince, afterwards, agrees with the thinking of the present King." Thereupon *Ohm* Horn responded, "Then we also think differently, with such an acceptance, we must act according to our King." In the end, *Ohm* Siebert added, "*Ohm* Donner will probably not do it again, what he has already done." "What?" *Ohm* Horn retorted. "The baptism," replied *Ohm* Siebert. *Ohm* Horn responded, "We recognize the order of the King, and you cannot therefore declare it as wrong."

Ohm Horn also had to present to *Ohm* Siebert, the case of a 17-year-old young man by the name of Cornelius Allert, who had come to see me. He had a Mennonite father, but was born of a Lutheran mother, and had shared with me that he had talked with both *Ohm* Sieberts about

becoming a Mennonite. They had given the answer: If he had not been baptized as a child, then it could have been possible, but as it was now, absolutely not. As a result, he had asked if I could help him. He would apply for the freedom or permission to do so. I responded that I would discuss it with the Kleinwerder ministerial. Now *Ohm* Horn wanted to know *Ohm* Siebert's thinking on the matter, and whether there was anything to complain about in regards to his lifestyle. After that *Ohm* Siebert replied, that there was nothing to say about the young man. His father, the elderly *Ohm* Siebert, however, would not allow the acceptance to happen in their congregation, or even by another bishop. If he had not been baptized as a child, it could have been possible, but not now. *Ohm* Dirk Allert, a cousin of the young man's father, responded, "If the young man is accepted into the Grosswerder congregation, and comes to us with an *Attest*, would it be possible then?" *Ohm* Siebert replied, "If he travels to Holland and comes back with an *Attest*." Then *Ohm* Siebert added, "That is different, that we would accept." *Ohm* Allert was filled with indignation at that reply, and said, "*Ohm* Siebert, you talk so naively, so that I don't know how to respond. If the *Attest* from Holland is valid, then the *Attest* from the Grosswerder is most certainly also valid." We are closely affiliated with the Grosswerder congregation. Finally, *Ohm* Siebert said that there would first have to be a meeting with the other bishops to discuss the baptism.

This is how we reveal the misconstrued thinking of misguided ministers. Before, the baptism was acceptable, but the acceptance left much to be concerned about, because we really didn't know how we should conduct ourselves. Therefore, the best option was to not accept anyone, whether they were baptized as a child, or not. Now, however, we have received the ordinance from the government regarding how and whom we can accept. At present they want to exclude those who were baptized as children. Who cannot see how roguishly the Sieberts are acting in this matter? Primarily, they want to take revenge on me, and do not realize they are arguing against God's Word. How does their present thinking, line up with their previous thinking? Before they tried to convince the people that acceptance would lead to great persecution. Since they see that we now have the freedom to accept people, they make baptism the barrier. Oh! These people are a picture of misery.

April 2, 1784 – On April 2nd I received a letter from *Ohm* Sperling in which he shared that on the past Sunday, the 4 deputy brothers (who were named on page 57 [January 22, 1784], came to see them in the ministers' room, and announced that they wanted to have *Ohm* Steffen Koerber serve them with baptism and communion. I was not to be the one. Thereupon, *Ohm* Sperling asked them what complaints they had about my teaching or my lifestyle. They answered, nothing! Because I so carefully observed baptism, they did not like me. After that, the other ministers all complained about *Ohm* Siebert. *Ohm* Sperling wanted our advice.

April 3, 1784 – On April 3rd, I sent our advice in writing: they should withdraw from the debates with the deputy brothers, as much as possible. Both *Ohm* Sieberts had to prompt them that our thinking about baptism was not scriptural, in an attempt to convince me, as well as them. If

they were successful, we would have to give in. If they were unsuccessful, however, it would also make for a bad situation, to reject someone without cause. They were also to confront them on the nasty disposition the two were harbouring against me. If we were united last year, were the heart and mouth in agreement at that time? Had I done something wrong since then, to warrant being rejected?

Ohm Sperling wrote that I should communicate in writing with the government regarding the young man Allert. I responded to him that at present the best thing for our friend Allert is to be content with his situation, until the matter regarding the Sieberts works itself out. I also advised him to write to *Ohm* Koerber and tell him that the intimidation surrounding the service of the elements, although on behalf of the whole congregation, happened because of him and that it was wrong. He should guard himself against the kind of service that primarily feeds his self-will. I advised *Ohm* Sperling and the other *Ohms* ahead of time, that they should just let *Ohm* Koerber serve, because I would not serve them under those circumstances. They answered, however, that they could not do that, and let him serve because there was more to it. They would focus on Koerber's implementation in the congregation, of unwritten directives that would only bring about disruption.

Ohm Sperling also informed me that 2 Russian Mennonites had arrived at the home of Gerhard Wiebe, namely minister Woldener and one of the brethren, Walter. The people are on the way to Hungary, in order to bring those brethren back to Russia, because during the persecution there, they became Catholic, and it was weighing heavily on their minds. A number already left Hungary last fall and arrived at *Ohm* Benjamin Wedel in Przechowka, spent the winter there and will probably join these, and travel to Russia.

Without a doubt, God has allowed these people to come into our lives, so that our half-hearted Mennonites can see that even now he has true followers, and recognize how poor their excuse is when they quip, "Who would still put up with persecution?" "What happened in the past during the time of the martyrs, is not happening today." "We would rather forsake our faith first, before giving up our land and estates."

Both of these things have, however, been fulfilled in these people, specifically those living in Russia now. Among those is also Joseph Mueller, who has remained steadfast like the Mennonites during the first period of martyrdom. The others, however, who are hurrying after them now, are those whose thinking was amiss, which currently applies to many of the brethren among us. They thought they could naturally serve God in any religion, and understood Peter's message in Acts 10: 34-35, just as our brethren with their wrong thinking. They tried to deceive others and disown their faith, just to remain in possession of their land and estates. Now that they have experienced a spiritual awakening, what fear and a feeling of trepidation that produces. Now they painstakingly recognize, what the impact is of disowning one's once-in-a-lifetime confession of truth for temporal gain. Now the husband is leaving his wife, and the wife her husband, children are leaving their parents, in fact they are leaving

everything, to solely save themselves, in order to serve God according to their erstwhile Confession of Faith.

From this we can see what faith is all about, and how difficult and awful it turns out, when one acts so irresponsibly in matters of faith. May the Lord our God enlighten us all, that we would love him above all things, increasingly pursue the exercise of his will, and confess his word of truth with esteem and reverence before all the world, to the honour of his name and the salvation of our souls. Amen.

[April 18, 1784] - It was decided amongst ourselves that the young man, Allert, who had been to see Peter Nickel at Altendorf, and whom I had referred to on page 60 [March 7, 1784], should be accepted. I presented his situation to our ministerial on the 1st Sunday after Easter and shared with them what *Ohm* Siebert's view on this matter was. He said he had no real concern, but because the young man had been baptized as a child, he should not be accepted. Deacons Schroeder and Mekelburger, and Jacob Quiring remained silent. After the sermon, however, *Ohm* Schroeder responded that he had considered it, and thought it would be better if Allert were not accepted, because things were peaceful at present, and doing so would again lead to much unrest. I replied, "What does such peace help us, if we can't even bring this about?" Now, however, since the former threatening representations have come to an end, and the Mennonite ministers do not want to give their approval, because of the baptism, I hope we can get some peace. Now it remains to be seen, just how many Mennonite *Ohms* we have among us. *Ohm* Schroeder then said, "Indeed, that's what I thought, that you were headed there. Then do what you find to be good." Heinrich Mekelburger who continually claims that he cannot understand baptism, and who is always ambiguous, and, as it were, "limps on both sides", became very red-faced. He remained silent, however.

April 19, 1784 – On April 19th the young man, Allert, came to see me, and persisted about being accepted into our congregation. I wrote to the government, presenting the case of a person by the name of C[ornelius] Allert, who was born in wedlock of a Mennonite father and a Lutheran mother, who had reached the age of 17, and who insisted on becoming a Mennonite. In accordance with the aforementioned royal order (which I reported on page 59 [January 24, 1784]), I inquired as to how I was to act in this case.

I received a letter from *Ohm* Sperling, in which he informed me, that on Good Friday [April 9], he and his fellow minister submitted an issue for consideration, in front of *Ohm* Hans Siebert and Deacon Peter Funk (who agreed with the Sieberts). They desired to be absolutely satisfied, that they and *Ohm* Donner, in the matter of baptism, were acting unjustly, because if *Ohm* Donner could not serve them, because of the baptism issue, then they could also not remain in their ministerial role. *Ohm* Hans Siebert had become embarrassed and had said that the introduction of the 4 deputy brethren had been utterly mundane. If they could convince *Ohm* Donner to let alone the baptism, all would be good. What an inappropriate demand from a

Mennonite Minister! Oh! When the knowledge of God and self-awareness is lacking, then what else makes someone a minister, and how does he lead his flock? May the Lord himself send ministers into his congregation.

May 11, 1784 – Since I had not received a decision from the government regarding the young man, Allert, Peter Nickel from Altendorf travelled to Marienwerder, and brought me the decision that stated that I could accept him into our congregation. The statement was dated May 11th.

May 13, 1784 – On May 13th I wrote to the Kleinwerder ministerial, asking about Allert's lifestyle.

[May 20, 1784] – Because *Ohm* Isaac Stobbe from the congregation in Danzig had been paralyzed on his left side by a stroke, he and their ministerial requested that I serve their congregation holy communion. I did that on the Sunday after Ascension Day [May 23, 1784].

[May 30, 1784] – On Pentecost I received a letter from *Ohm* Dirk Allert, in which he informed me that *Ohm* Hans Siebert, together with Peter Nickel and Melchior Froese from Markushof, had travelled to *Ohm* Koerber in Graudenz, and called on him on their return trip. They asked him to write me that a meeting was being planned for the day after Saint John the Baptist's Day, on June 25th. In regard to the matter which concerned the acceptance of the young man Allert, they were not willing to dictate to me, or prohibit nor refuse me. However, if he came to them with an *Attest*, they would not accept him.

Woe to the decisionmakers who want to divide and breakup: How long are you going to remain confused and confound those around you? Or how long will this type of reasoning last? It is a mere fantasy, as all of your past conclusions have been.

The aforementioned meeting was attended by *Ohm* Horn and Jan Quiring from our congregation, bishops from all the other congregations, including from Lithuania. They alluded to a separation, but still no decision was made that day. Our *Ohms* travelled home.

June 27, 1784 – (Presentation in the Kleinwerder) On Sunday, June 27th the *Ohms* all travelled to hear the sermon which was preached by Heinrich Jantzen from Lithuania. Before the sermon, Hans Siebert presented to *Ohm* Sperling, along with the other ministers, the information that he, together with the bishops had agreed on, a declaration which then was to be publicized in the congregations. *Ohm* Sperling and the others from the ministerial were opposed. Then it was decided to discuss it with the brethren the next day, before making it public. It happened as planned and even though *Ohm* Sperling made a most powerful presentation, they proceeded regardless.

As a result, 5 congregations, including Flemish, separated from us, because of the acceptance and baptism issues. They declared themselves against all acceptances, and even excluded the children of mixed marriages.

I lament that the evil ways of the Lithuanians have not been punished. Bishop H[einrich] Jantzen's confession that in communion the bread is the flesh, and the wine is the blood of Jesus, goes against that of *Ohm* Horn. Minister Heinrich Rosfeld, in a drunken state, is involved in brawls with other people. The children of deacons have confessed to wrongdoings and similar unflattering incidents, and those people are causing confusion here. The Lord have mercy.

July 1, 1784 – I requested a copy of the declaration from H[ans] Siebert and the petition which they were going to present to the government. He sent me the script and had someone tell me that they had not gone to the authorities. This was not the truth, because it had been witnessed by an assessor for the governing council, who had rejected it. I wrote him that we considered his petition unevangelical and breaking the covenant, which would have evil consequences, and as a result, we would speak out against it.

Five congregations had composed the declaration, which said that any person conceived of a mixed marriage or from another religion, would not be accepted or baptized by us, or in Holland, or recognized as a member. This would happen even if they brought a valid *Attest*, which would be rejected. As a result, on July 15th I notified the church in Amsterdam, called "*Die Sonne*", of the state of affairs.

August 1784 – *Ohm* Hans Siebert travelled to the Graudenz lowlands in August, to discuss with *Ohm* Steffen Koerber, the service of baptism and communion, which he promised to carry out. Thereupon, *Ohm* Sperling and the other *Ohms* also sent 2 brethren to him, asking that he not come because it would increase the disruptions within the congregation. However, he said he would come nonetheless. He was going to talk with *Ohm* Sperling ahead of time, something he did not do. Hereafter, he served with baptism, but several children were left behind. He served communion on the same day, but only to a small number of people. None of the *Ohms* were present, not even *Ohm* Siebert had gone along. The brethren had drained away the wine. The next day he gathered the brethren, and once again wanted to impress upon them the directive, but because a number of brethren from Sperling's side were present, the latter made known their opposition, resulting in a great commotion being raised by Siebert's side. It became evident later on that Steffen Koerber had had in mind, to anoint Hans Siebert as a Bishop. Still, that was thwarted. When one ponders such things, one becomes aware of what kind of an unscrupulous man Koerber is.

August 19, 1784 – On August 19th the elderly *Ohm* Siebert died. May the Lord be merciful to him.

September 29, 1784 – On September 29th we received a reply from Amsterdam. In it they condemned the actions of Siebert's side, and cut themselves off from their fellowship. I have sent copies to Koerber, Hans Siebert and Jacob Ewert. I included a note saying, that from this, they could not only see what the thinking of the people from Holland is, but also see the light of day, in that I was not professing anything new, just that of the earlier Anabaptists. I asked them to put a stop to the unrest.

His son, Hans Siebert promoted the unrest with greater intensity. Since receiving a copy of the reply from Amsterdam, as mentioned earlier, he called on his deputy brethren to provide him with some counsel. Could they find something in the letter that would reveal, that I had communicated the untruth to Amsterdam? Their efforts were in vain.

An issue arose in the midst of this, concerning a Flemish person by the name of Dirk Neufeld from the congregation in Elbing. He wanted to move over to the congregation in Thiensdorf in order to get married and had requested an *Attest* from Elbing. However, Bishop Gert Wiebe wrote to the Thiensdorf *Ohms* informing them that furthermore, they would not be sending an *Attest*. Their reason was that the issue surrounding baptism caused so much conflict and quarrelling in the congregation and strayed away from the most important faith doctrine. As a result, they feared that a consent for Neufeld to move to the other congregation, would signal a participation in other sins.

Further, *Ohm* Siebert also received the decision of the Crown Prince, which I will report on now. In 1783 it happened that three young men from the Groningen Mennonite congregation in Driesen became soldiers in the Crown Prince's regiment. During one of their leaves, they caused all sorts of mischief. One of them who was not yet baptized, urged the Crown Prince to send Bishop Peter Jantzen an order to baptize him. Indeed, they came to Schwetz to the Groningen Mennonites. They dropped some money into the pocket of a Mennonite and then accused him of taking earnest money, resulting in a fight breaking out. *Ohm* Koerber immediately reported this to *Ohm* Siebert and he proclaimed it from the rooftop: Now it has gone so far that the Crown Prince is allowing the Mennonites to recruit, by ordering them to baptize soldiers. The blame for that lay with *Ohm* Donner and his rebaptism. His gloating and schadenfreude were short-lived, because Bishop Benjamin Wedel from the Schwetz congregation came to see me, and conferred with me and the Flemish congregations, regarding this matter. It was seen as a good idea for B[enjamin] Wedel to send a summative reminder to the Crown Prince of the actions of the 3 soldiers on leave. I made sure that it was mailed from Tiegenhof. The statement arrived from the Crown Prince, that all this had happened without his knowledge, all the mischief the soldiers on leave had created. They had also received an order, so as not to create further unrest among the Mennonites. Also, Bishop P[eter] Jantzen renounced the baptism of the soldier, as permitted by the Crown Prince, because it tarnishes the tenets of Mennonite faith. Therefore, the Crown Prince responded, that if it was against the principles of Mennonite faith, they were not permitted to do it. With that, he commanded the

Lutheran minister in Driesen to baptize the soldier. H[ans] Siebert received copies of all the letters at the same time: the latter statement, the letter from Amsterdam (in which they write that they don't recognize Siebert and his cohorts as Mennonites), as well as the letter from Gert Wiebe, which I mentioned earlier. On the upcoming Sunday he announced the following to the brethren. Because our opponents wrote to Holland and got a reply, he found it necessary to have a meeting with his like-minded brethren, on Monday at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, at his home. There were more important things to talk about, that needed to be understood in the letter from G[ert] Wiebe. I don't yet know what was decided there.

When you contemplate such conduct of the brethren, how bad it is, to talk in that manner in the presence of *Ohm* Sperling and the other *Ohms*, you can recognize from this, the foolishness of Siebert. All the aforementioned letters are in my safe keeping.

Afterwards, *Ohm* Sperling notified me, that he has requested from Hans Siebert the statement from the letter to Holland. However, he had answered, "Once the roads are frozen, there would be a meeting for the 5 congregations, and at that point they would make the decision public."

[November 28, 1784] – On the First Advent I received three books that dealt with baptism and were sent over from Amsterdam, from "*Die Sonne*" congregation. The first one carries the title "*Child Baptism Discarded and the Institution of Adult Baptism*". The other consists of 18 letters that refute child baptism, and the third "*The Beneficial Role of Baptism in Liturgical Celebrations*". I have planned to translate this last one into German, because of its important commentary on the topic.

December 4, 1784 – On December 4th I wrote to Amsterdam again, thanking them for their friendship and the books. I also wrote a letter, on behalf of *Ohm* Sperling and his fellow brethren, asking how they should conduct themselves when Hans Siebert is installed as bishop. I have safely stored copies of these letters. Hans Siebert has presented and married the young Flemish man, named Neufeld, without an *Attest*, and without accepting him.

Something to think about: A letter came to *Ohm* Sperling and myself from *Ohm* Koerber's neighbour, Malohn, who is a Catholic separatist, no doubt at the behest of Koerber. The letter contained much confusing and pointed talk, and harsh phrases.

N.B. The 3 Mennonites were deported to Poland. The Crown Prince sent them a pardon, so they could come back into the country, but they could not be soldiers. They did return and are no longer soldiers. This indicates that *Ohm* Koerber's sham was wrong.

N.B. The brethren from Amsterdam sent over 3 books: the one carries the title "*Child Baptism Discarded and the Institution of Adult Baptism*", the other was made up of letters on the same

topic, and the third was entitled “*The Beneficial Role of Baptism in Liturgical Celebrations*”. I translated the last one into German.

January 4, 1785 – On January 4th Bishop Benjamin Wedel from the Groningen congregation in Przechowka, died in Schwetz. I talked about him in the [diary] entries from January 1774 and September 29, 1784. He was most gracious and a well-meaning, faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ours was a loving and respectful acquaintance. May the Lord gladden his soul.

January 6, 1785 – On January 6th, I received information that Siebert, together with Melchior Froese from Markushof, had travelled to see Koerber to talk about the response to the letter from Amsterdam. Some say that they have already sent a reply to Amsterdam.

January 25, 1785 – On January 25th I received an order from War Counselor Schlemmer from Marienburg, that I should come to see him on January 26th, to discuss with him the issue of acceptance into the congregation. I arrived there with *Ohm* Jan Quiring, only to find *Ohm* Sperling there with *Ohm* Dirk Allert, *Ohm* Sperling also having received an order. We met with the War Counselor, who showed us a petition which the 5 congregations had sent the King via the mail. In it they complained about me regarding the issues of acceptance and baptism and asked the King to forbid those. I showed the War Counselor the orders and regulation regarding these matters. Having access to that information, he judged the allegation to be false. He told me to arrange for all congregations to come and meet with him. In our conversation, he expressed great surprise at the considerable confusion in the Kleinwerder congregation, concerning their undersigned documents, the deputy brethren, and the unifying text also. He told me that I should always remember that when a conflict arises among the Mennonites, the ministers should meet, or even if only a couple of deacons, and lay out Holy Scripture and the tenets of their religion as the guiding principle, thereby settling the matter. What then did the stupid evil people (here he referred to the deputy brethren) have to say in this matter? He concluded by saying, “Dear *Ohm* Donner, what is there to do? We must pity those people because they are in the dark and we must bring them into the light.” It is a pathetic predicament that those bishops and ministers such as Steffen Koerber and Hans Siebert find themselves in. They are betrayers of their own religion and want to force us to agree to their unscrupulous statement. Yes, they want to end our religious freedom. However, I hope that our merciful God will destroy their evil attacks.

February 2, 1785 - Because the War Counselor wanted to record the proceedings regarding this issue and, above all about me, and there was no time for that, *Ohm* Cornelius Grunau and I travelled to see him again on February 2nd. He told me he would not yet draw up a report on my issue, because he had already told the Sieberts that they had to come to an agreement with me, and that their reconciliation proposal would go nowhere. They were to be in discussion with me. Right now, they had travelled to see Koerber. When they returned, they would have to provide their answer. Then he [War Counselor] would request me and all my fellow ministers

to come and see him at the end of the following week, at which time he wanted to bring us together. I said, "If they would get rid of their proposal to unify and recognize that they had made improper accusations against me, then I would want to unite with them, but without any restriction to our religious freedom." They had also told the War Counselor it was on the condition that I didn't want to baptize those children, because it appeared as if the baptism of other religions was thereby being despised. I answered, "Honourable War Counselor, that is the source of all the unrest, namely, the baptism, but I beg you to consider, whether I can do otherwise as an Anabaptist bishop?" If I want to carry out my ministry conscientiously, I cannot approve child baptism in our congregation, but rather must baptize those people, even though they were baptized as children. He replied, "That statement is quite right." We talked further and he gave me his full approval, promising to settle the matter as best he could.

What conclusions were drawn by Siebert's side, together with their *Ohm* Koerber, will be and will have to be revealed soon.

I also told the War Counselor that I wanted to send to the King, a memorandum with my opposing view. He advised me against that and assured me that my innocence would be quite evident to the King in the covenant which he was going to prepare. However, if they were not agreeable, then I could do it and he would support me.

February 14, 1785 – On February 14th *Ohm* Grunau and I had to go to Marienburg. There we met *Ohm* Sperling with his fellow ministers, and Gert Jantzen from the Stuhm congregation. *Ohm* Hans Siebert had his brother, Jacob Siebert, Peter Nickel and Hans Siebert Junior with him. When we arrived, the War Counselor presented the issue. Since the Sieberts had presented him with large gifts, he was on their side and in full support of their conduct. Finally, he asked if we were all ministers, and when he heard that the three, namely Jacob Siebert, Peter Nickel and Hans Siebert Junior were not ministers, they had to leave. This annoyed them vehemently. The Sieberts had raised many false accusations about me with the War Counselor. As a result, he discussed baptism with me, in their presence. That written record, was placed in the church register.

April 2, 1785 – On April 2nd I again received letters from Holland, specifically one to our ministerial, the second to Johann Sperling and the third to the 5 congregations. I sent the letter to *Ohm* Sperling and the one addressed to the 5 congregations to the Kleinwerder, and the last one I sent to *Ohm* Hans Siebert. This detailed and well written letter was, according to the wish of the people in Holland, to be read in front of the brethren of each of the 5 congregations. They will probably not do that, because a number of people from their side may thereby get a different sense of the issue.

April 12, 1785 – [This entry appears after the entries for April 15th and 16th in the diary.] On the 12th I was in Marienburg and met with *Ohm* Sperling, who had spoken with the War Counselor,

regarding the decision of the King. There was nothing available, yet. He also told me that he [War Counselor] had humiliated Hans Siebert Junior and Jacob Siebert, who were there the same day, about the fact that they had chosen Malohn as their leader (*Ohm* Sperling had shown the letter written by Malohn, along with the letter from Holland to the War Counselor). The War Counselor found his letter [Malohn] to be evil, the one from Holland very pleasing. He had said, “Malohn is a scoundrel, a fellow who has no religion, etc.” He wanted to cut him down to size, so that he would come to his senses. He also admonished the Sieberts to allow the people in Holland to make the decision, because if the consistory [church tribunal] was given the authority in this matter, they would be “washed in a lye solution” together with Malohn. They had responded that *Ohm* Donner would win the case and that is exactly what he wants. The War Counselor had said to them, “You will then have to convince him that he is wrong, something you will probably leave well alone.”

The War Counselor was well pleased with the letter from Holland to the 5 congregations. He had said it had fully convinced him, that I was absolutely right.

April 15, 1785 – [This entry appears after the April 16th entry in the diary.] I wrote to the government in Marienwerder, informing them that Jacob Friesen from Brunau had a daughter (whose mother was from the Reformed Church) who wanted to become Mennonite, and inquired as to whether I could accept her. On May 8th I received their decision that I was free to do so.

April 16, 1785 – I wrote to Amsterdam again and notified them that the 5 congregations had sent a petition to the King.

April 20, 1785 – At the prayer meeting on April 20th, *Ohm* Sperling read the letter from Holland to the brethren, because *Ohm* H[ans] Siebert had not wanted to do it.

The War Counselor had also denied the Sieberts’ request to have *Ohm* Koerber serve them at this time. They had to first settle their issue with me. It will be a tough task for them and a “hard nut to crack”.

On Mid-Pentecost I baptized the new arrivals to our congregation, among them Friesen’s daughter.

What the other ministers will say about that, however, will keep me wondering. Koerber and Ewert have both announced to their congregations that they received from the King, the information that *Ohm* Donner was not to accept nor baptize another person. In the process they complained a lot about me (in an insincere manner) saying that I would lose my position. Now everyone will realize that they are only feeding their congregation “the emptiness of wind”. This is rightfully the work of Koerber, who is confused himself and as a result, wants to confound everyone else. May the Lord convert him.

June 25, 1785 – On June 25th, the day after St. John’s Day [festival of the birth of John the Baptist], I travelled to Marienburg to talk with the War Counselor about the decision and

whether it had been handed down. Upon my arrival the Honourable War Counselor showed me the decision and said, "My dear *Ohm* Donner, he comes exactly at the right time. I received the decision yesterday. Of course, I want to read it for him, but for now he must keep it under wraps because the decision is addressed to the 5 congregations and therefore, I must first communicate it with them." He read it for me and I heard that he determined their complaint and request to be invalid and fully endorsed my actions. At the same time, he informed the chamber that the Mennonites were free to accept children of mixed marriages into a Mennonite Confession of Faith. The War Counselor said he would issue the 5 congregations the decision and would send me a written copy and report on how the matter turned out. May our loving God receive our gratitude for the mercy he has demonstrated in this situation, that he has guided the heart of the King to grant us our religious freedom.

Only time will tell how the Sieberts will now conduct themselves when they see and are convinced about how unjustly they acted. They will be very annoyed that the matter turned out this way. They ended up being the agent that led to the confirmation of freedom in the area of acceptance into membership. The declaration of the King to the chamber, in response to the petition from the 5 congregations, reads as follows:

"The King informs the chamber, that from the report he has received, he has learned that the Mennonite Minister Donner has accepted two women, who have a Mennonite father and a Lutheran mother, with the approval of the mother and the authorization of the royal government, into the Mennonite Confession of Faith. Another person, a young man, who had a Mennonite father and received authorization from the government, was accepted likewise. One can therefore see that Minister Donner has only done what he was authorized to do, and thus no harm has come to the King's canton. The Mennonite faith *Privilegium* will be open to harm to a much lesser degree. As a result, the chamber is to inform the 5 congregations, that the Mennonites have the freedom to accept children born of mixed marriages."

When the decision was made public, the council chamber inquired of the King, whether it was advisable to yield to the Mennonites regarding the acceptance of children from mixed marriages. Then the King responded to the chamber in the following manner: "In response to your question of whether it is advisable to give the Mennonites the freedom to accept children from mixed marriages, we want to make it known that because the practice of open, unrestricted tolerance is desirable in our land, then the Mennonites cannot be prohibited from accepting those children. You should have no reservations about this matter." Thus far the report.

How marvellously God has ordained it: the 5 congregations wanted to suppress the freedom and as a result of their complaint this freedom is well protected. It happened here in the same manner as when Joseph spoke to his brothers: "You intended to harm me, but God intended it

for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.” [Genesis 50:20] The Lord be praised and turn our hearts towards gratitude.

July 5, 1785 – On July 5th *Ohm* Sperling and *Ohm* Peter Grunau from the Kleinwerder came to see me and reported that Hans Siebert had again given cause for new unrest. Last week Hans Siebert had travelled to the Graudenz Lowland and on the following Sunday during the sermon, he shared a greeting from the local *Ohms* and announced that together they decided on a meeting that was to be held on July 30th in the Kleinwerder to see if they could build unity. *Ohm* Sperling replied that this was dear to him and he wished that there would be peace and harmony among them one day. Hans Siebert responded, “Isn’t it a good thing that with time we present the youth who want to be part of the congregation?” *Ohm* Sperling answered, “Yes, when we achieve unity then baptism can also happen.” However, Hans Siebert did not tell the *Ohms* that he was going to present the youth after the sermon, much less that Koerber was again going to administer baptism. After the sermon he introduced the new candidates and added that the man who would be administering baptism, first had to carry out that same duty in his and other congregations. Thereupon *Ohm* Sperling had an intense conversation with Siebert, admonished him regarding his erroneous scheming and called on him not to continue with the matter. Nonetheless, Siebert said he wanted to see who would stop him from carrying it out, for it could destroy the possibility of Koerber installing Siebert as bishop. Thus, we advised *Ohm* Sperling that he immediately travel to Marienburg to see the War Counselor and ask him if he could avert Siebert’s plan. If he couldn’t do that *Ohm* Sperling wanted to forthwith travel to see the government and notify them of the matter. Before the sermon *Ohm* Sperling had asked Siebert, if he had heard anything about the declaration from the King yet? Siebert answered, that he knew nothing about it. Of course, *Ohm* Sperling already knew that the war counselor had read it to me. It can be assumed that the War Counselor would have shown the declaration to the Sieberts, but they are just denying it. They have always gone about this matter with lies and deception.

Right now, it seems to me that this matter will undergo a much closer examination. Now, since the declaration of the King runs absolutely counter to the fear of the Sieberts, it clearly reveals that their opposition applies only to our Confession of Faith and baptism, which they will say is not possible.

May the Word of the Lord Jesus and his precious commandments be preserved.

July 9, 1785 – On Saturday, July 9th, I travelled to Marienburg in order to request the War Counselor to read for me the declaration. He gave me a copy of it. There I met *Ohm* Sperling together with *Ohm* Cornelis Philippsen. We brought forward to the War Counselor the actions of the Sieberts. Then he sent Hans Siebert an order: Not to proceed with their dealings until he had settled things with the other *Ohms* and that was to happen this same week. If, however, no unity among them was achieved, then he would schedule a hearing with them and the matter would be referred to a higher authority.

July 10, 1785 – The following day, the 7th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, I brought forward to our brothers and sisters, as they were probably aware of, how the great unrest regarding the acceptance and baptism of the children of mixed marriages had begun. I informed them that the other congregations had sent a petition to the King last year on November 15th, in which they made accusations against me. Firstly, my act of acceptance was harming the King in the canton. Secondly, the Mennonite *Privilegium* of Grace would thereby fall through. Thirdly, they requested that the King force me to abandon acceptance so that rebaptism would stop. With this, the King of our West Prussian chamber commanded that an investigation into the matter be carried out. The chamber gave the instruction to our Honourable War Counselor Schlemmer in Marienburg. He had called us to meet with him on February 4th, compiled a report thereof and it was sent to the King. In response the King had issued them a declaration which I was going to read for them.

After reading it aloud I said, “From this the friends will see that I am not the man they previously thought me to be.” First, I advised those who had stood with me on our clear Confession of Faith, that they should humbly thank God that he guided the heart of the King in such a way as to protect our freedom of conscience. Therefore, we had reason to ask God to keep his Word:

*Furthermore, preserve your Word and unto us do good,
So that we can serve God in this place as we should.*

To the others I said that I hoped all those who had stood against acceptance and baptism all along, would realize that they had acted badly. I also hoped that they would accept that it is their duty to confess that they have sinned against God and the church, and enter into reconciliation so that they can live as true members of the Anabaptist church. Thereafter I thanked them for their attentive listening during the reading of the declaration and then we all departed.

This will have a transforming influence as can already be seen in our Deacon Heinrich Mekelburger who was stunned and shocked. However, no one said anything. In that way, God can curb the pride of antagonists before they make mistakes. Praise to him in eternity.

[July 24, 1785] – On the 9th Sunday after Trinity Sunday I once again presented the declaration from the King to our gathering. I also got a letter from H[ans] Siebert in which he informed me that a meeting of all our congregations was to be held on July 30th in the Kleinwerder, in order to establish unity, and I was obliged to attend.

July 29, 1785 – On the day before the meeting I gathered all our deacons together in order to talk about whether they had changed their thinking. The two Mekelburgers were still persistent and David spoke up. He recognized only one baptism: either child baptism or adult baptism. I responded, “Then you can’t be Mennonites!” They became irate about that and said that I had forced them to forsake the ministry and congregation. At present they are not coming to the service. The next day, Saturday, Cornelis Grunau, Jan Quiring and I travelled to a meeting in the Kleinwerder. After much exchange of words (too many to report on) they landed on the

statement, that they establish the acceptance of members but never those who were baptized as children. As a result, they wanted to announce to their congregations that from now on the people who were part of mixed marriages should not allow their children to be baptized as infants. I responded that we did not consent to either. I asked them if they still held to their proposal to unify from June 25th last year. They responded that if I didn't agree with them, then the proposal would remain unchanged. I answered, "Then I have done my job and you needn't have forced me to come here." In the end they announced, "Wouldn't it be a good idea to provide a bishop for the Thiensdorf congregation?" I said, "When it can happen in unity within the ministry, then it is a good thing." *Ohm* Sperling and his fellow ministers then arose and not only objected but also excused themselves from the election process for bishop. Steffen Koerber who introduced the process said, "Then don't be surprised if it happens."

[July 31, 1785] – The following day on the 10th Sunday after Trinity Sunday they all travelled to hear the sermon, (we did not, but bade each other farewell with the words "May God be with you") and nonetheless carried out the election of a bishop. Hans Siebert was elected as Bishop and even though Sperling and many brethren spoke out against it publicly, they included all the ministers in the election process.

In the afternoon we drove home via Marienburg and *Ohm* Sperling travelled with us. There we reported the incident to the War Counselor. He summoned Siebert to come on Tuesday, and we were to come on the afternoon of the same day.

August 2, 1785 – When we arrived on August 2nd, he [War Counselor] told us that he had had a 2-hour conversation with them and after very many suggestions, they finally consented to accepting the youth baptized as children. However, he was to persuade me to give in on announcing to the congregations that people who are living in mixed marriages should not allow their children to be baptized as infants. I said I would think about it.

The War Counselor had told Hans Siebert that he did not recognize him as a bishop because his election was carried out in a tumultuous and an ungodly manner.

[August 14, 1785] – On the 12th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, Cornelius Philippsen from the Kleinwerder came to see me and brought me the news that the Sieberts had informed them that they would go ahead with baptism and communion, as well as the installation of H[ans] Siebert as Bishop. He asked me to come to Marienburg on Wednesday as *Ohm* Sperling would also be there. We talked with the War Counselor who advised us to report the matter to the government. *Ohm* Sperling together with Ketler from Thiergarth travelled there from Marienwerder on the same day yet, and wanted to ask that a stop be put to the ministry of H[ans] Siebert.

The government sent a directive about that to Koerber and Siebert, that they should halt the plans until the matter had been investigated. I have the copy of the directive in my safekeeping.

November 9, 1785 – On November 9th *Ohm* Sperling was called upon to appear in Marienburg in front of *Herr* Krokisiur. This gentleman was part of the District Justice Commission and had received the order to investigate the matter. I received the news from *Ohm* Sperling and travelled there with *Ohm* Horn. We met *Ohm* Sperling, Allert and C[ornels] Philippsen there. We went to see the gentleman whose responsibility it was to investigate the two issues, namely whether Siebert had legitimately been elected as Bishop and wherein lies the conflict regarding acceptance into the congregation. He spoke to us first and we had to outline the reasons to prove the incorrectness of Siebert’s election. I had compiled a summary of the reasons and gave it to the gentleman, along with our Confession of Faith in which the fifth article gives the proof. He wrote a report, we had to make our exit and then Siebert was told to come in. His entrance was quite a spectacle because he had ministers and deacons from all the congregations and indeed, Koerber was also there. The deputy brethren and others from the Kleinwerder were there, a total of 15 persons. Most miserable was the fact that they were using the Justice Commissionaire as their lawyer, as if he understood our tenets of faith better than so many of our ministers. They had been in the room for about an hour when we were asked to come in. Then *Herr* Krokisiur spoke, “I have read for them your statements of proof, but because they cannot respond so quickly, they have asked for a copy and three weeks to consider it.” I said, “We’ll leave it up to the Honourable *Herr* Commissionaire as to what he deems to be good. The lawyer said, “You have had time to think about this, so why can’t we also.” I answered, “It is all good.” Then we all had to sign the report including Siebert and Peter Funk.

We did not exchange any words. It is astounding that these bishops, ministers and deacons were not able to refute our statements of proof, but instead took on a lawyer and entrusted him with our articles of faith but he was not in a position to dispute them.

I live in the hope that God will put an end to their misguided and ungodly behaviour, and graciously uphold our faith teachings.

November 23, 1785 – The Lutheran preacher and inspector from Neuteich, Bobrik, wanted to publish a book of sermons and wrote to me on August 8th requesting that I announce it in the congregation. Would there be interested persons who would be willing to pay for the book in advance? The advance price was to be 4 ½ *Florin* Prussian currency for each book. This was announced in the congregation on 3 successive Sundays and I sent in the following prepayments:

<i>Ohm</i> Johann Sperling		
for himself and his fellow ministers		
prepaid for 5 sermon books at 4 ½ <i>Florin</i> Prussian currency		22 <i>Florin</i> 15 <i>Groschen</i>
I [Donner] and my fellow ministers	4 books	18 <i>Florin</i>
Simon Dau from Rohtebude	1 book	4 <i>Florin</i> 15 <i>Groschen</i>
Hans Friesen from Marienau	1 book	4 <i>Florin</i> 15 <i>Groschen</i>
Ertmann Stobbe from Tiegenhof	1 book	4 <i>Florin</i> 15 <i>Groschen</i>
Peter Stobbe from Tiegenhof	1 book	4 <i>Florin</i> 15 <i>Groschen</i>

Heinrich Dick from Pietzkendorf	1 book	4 Florin 15 Groschen
Total	14 books at 4 Florin 15 Groschen	equals 63 Florin

On November 23rd I brought this money to the *Herrn* Inspector in Neuteich and the books should be available from the printer next year around Pentecost.

December 16, 1785 – The next court hearing for the investigation was to happen on December 16th. The ice drifts in the Nogat River prevented me from travelling there, so *Ohm* Sperling was given more time and copies of their refutation. The lawyer’s supporting document for Siebert’s election was 6 pages long. The defense of the refusal to accept the children born of mixed marriages was covered in 6 pages of writing. The Sieberts had also prepared a testimony about *Ohm* Sperling’s talk which he had presented at the end of the sermon, regarding Koerber’s biased service of communion. They described this talk as blasphemy and the testimony was signed by 16 men from the Kleinwerder congregation. The most sordid aspect is that they twisted *Ohm* Sperling’s words, replacing truth with lies.

January 1786 – Because the Stuhm congregation, at the beginning of this year, did not want anything to do with the conflict, they sent a transcript to Siebert in Markushof. He, however, travelled there and preached. After the sermon the brethren had to remain while Siebert inquired about their reason for standing back. They replied that now that the matter was being dealt with through a lawyer, they wanted nothing to do with it. With much dejection Siebert begged them not to leave him because of the expenses of this matter which he acknowledged entirely. He would have his congregation look after the full cost. Thereafter it was decided that a meeting would be held in the Stuhm church the following Thursday. Siebert travelled to Koerber in Graudenz and met with him there again. After the Stuhm congregation discussed it further, they joined in again.

Something to consider: On January 2nd the Sieberts brought in a solicitor from Elbing, who had to take note of Siebert’s adherents in the Thiensdorf church for proof that the closest followers of Siebert were sticking with him. The people from Stuhm also wanted this but War Counselor Schlemmer from Marienburg denied them that.

Our opponents then rise up, corrupting the house of worship and making it into a den of thieves. May the War Counselor see this.

The Flemish congregations from Koenigsberg to as far as Neumark have given a clear statement to the royal government about and against the matter in dispute, in which they endorse our statement and on the other hand, disapprove of the Sieberts’ statement.

Because the 9th of February was set as the court hearing, we received a directive to submit our refutations before then to Commissionaire Krokisiur and that happened on January 20th. It was a rebuttal of their defense and a repetition of the proof of the incorrectness of Siebert’s election. Copies of those papers are available.

February 3, 1786 – On February 3rd I travelled to Marienburg to join *Ohm* Sperling, Allert, Philippsen and Corn[els] Ketler from Thiergartsfelde. Our opponents also came from all the congregations, in support of the lawyer. Because they could not respond so quickly to the documents we had submitted, they were again given additional time to reply. The Flemish congregations in Koenigsberg, Elbing, Danzig, Schwetz, from Driesen in Neumark, Tiegenhagen, Rosenort, Ladekopp, Burwalde and Heuboden had given the Commissionaire a statement on the morning of that same day. In the statement they addressed the evil perpetration of the 5 congregations as well as Siebert's false election on the one hand, and the acceptance I carried out and which was approved by the royal declaration on the other hand. The statement declared that they had no part in the disputes being considered and also did not want to have any part in them. This written statement was read in front of all of us by the secretary. Jacob Siebert in a rage, barked, "The Flemish Mennonites are none of our business; we are not united with them." Sperling answered, "We are, however, joined together in the *Privilegium* of Grace and we have issued *Attests* amongst ourselves." The Commissionaire responded, "It makes no difference. They are, nevertheless, all Mennonites."

Something to consider: I had written to Hamburg on January 2nd and received a reply on January 29th, which I passed on to the Commissionaire. I was to hand over the original copies of the orders regarding the acceptance issue, and the letters from Holland and Hamburg. Once the matter was settled, I would get those items back.

February 25, 1786 – On February 25th I received the news from several of our brethren that Cornelius Albrecht from Siebenhuben, with his cohorts, was sending a paper around to our congregational members asking them to sign that they are endorsing the Sieberts. I presented this to our congregation the following day, that is Sunday, and warned them about this seducement. In the afternoon we sent Simon Dau from Rothebude and Hans Friesen from Marienau to Heinrich Jantzen from Reimerswalde, who was one of the main rebels and at whose place people were called to gather at that time. When the two aforementioned arrived at his home, they found no one, because the people had changed their minds. They had warned H[einrich] Jantzen on our behalf, not to engage in destructive behaviour etc.

February 28, 1786 – On February 28th *Ohm* Jan Quiring and I travelled to Marienburg and informed the Honourable Krokisiur of the revolt. He immediately sent an order to the leaders of the revolt that they should hereby absolutely stop their activity. Ignoring the directive, they continued and forwarded to the lawyer Mehlmann, the names of the people they had signed up.

Our administrative official, in carrying out the order from the War Counselor, demanded that Willem Martens from Reimerswalde (who had gone around notifying the people) appear before him. He [Willem] then told him everything that he had been requested to say to the people. I have received a written copy of that and kept it safe.

March 20, 1786 – On March 20th Heinrich Eidse from Pietzkendorf was requested to appear before the administration. His excuse was that Corn[els] Albrecht from Siebenhuben talked him into signing up, using the threat that all who sided with Donner would have to become soldiers. Because he was young and possessed a great stature, he became scared and signed up. I also have this report in safekeeping.

The main rebels in our congregation are C[ornels] Albrecht from Siebenhuben, Simon Bestvater with his son Clas from Platenhof, Heinrich Jantzen from Reimerswalde, David Mekelburger from Tiegerweide, and Franz Quiring from Tiegenhagen.

April 7, 1786 – The scheduled day for the hearing was April 7th, but because I could not travel there due to a breach in the Vistula, it would not have been possible to organize anything. Our opponents, through their lawyer, have again handed in 13 written pages of answers, of which Sperling brought me a copy. The next court hearing was established for the 11th of May. I decided not to respond to all the endless verbose writing of the lawyer. *Ohm* Sperling, *Ohm* Dirk Allert, Cornels Ketler from Thiergartsfelde and I were at this hearing. Our opponents who were present included Jacob Siebert from Krebswalde, Deacon Peter Funk, Peter Nickel from Markushof, Willem Jantzen from Gueldenfeld, and Cornels Froese from Stalle, assisting the lawyer Mehlmann.

Our loving God guided things so that the adjudications were made, and it happened without much exchanging of words and without arguments. I cannot thank God enough, that despite the lawyer along with the uncouth Jacob Siebert, who once addressed me in a presumptuous manner and seriously attacked me in their writings, particularly in the last submissions which were full of the lawyer's pranks, I was able to feign that I did not understand any of that. When I was not present at the hearings, which happened twice, the lawyer, without restraint, spoke foolishly and carelessly, and attacked Sperling. Our Cornels Albrecht and Simon Bestvater put forward a writing in opposition to me and which Mehlmann had included with the aforementioned submissions.

The Honourable Commissionaire Krokisiur only advised that if our opponents did not mention this writing, then I should also not bring it up, because then Mehlmann would look for a reason to delay the finalizing of the statutes. I did that and remained silent; they too were completely silent.

The statutes were finalized and undersigned. It was painful to see how hard Jacob Siebert pushed to have the 16 witnesses (whom Sperling had wanted to persuade in a sermon, in which he was accused of blasphemy) swear an oath. The Honourable Krokisiur did not want to allow the swearing of an oath. I encouraged Jacob Siebert to do some reflecting and consider whether this matter was so important as to require the swearing of an oath? He said that if this issue is not important, then no issue is important!

Sperling had prepared a rebuttal to the written submission from the 16 material witnesses and offered that he could prevail against the witnesses which the truthful talk he has conducted

would show. Siebert was fixated on his request for the swearing of an oath. The Honourable Krokisiur said, "I will dictate no oath because the matter is not that important. Or do you think," he said to Siebert, "that I use an oath as frivolously as you do? It is too dear to my conscience, however, we will put in the report: if the government requests the witnesses to swear an oath, so be it." That did happen. After signing the report Siebert said, "We will contact the government about the swearing of an oath." Then Krokisiur got angry and said, "What, you want to defy me? You don't understand. Soon I will teach you another lesson." It felt as if he wanted to give Siebert a slap in the face.

When the others had left, I asked Honourable Krokisiur, "What should I do about Cornelis Albrecht and Simon Bestvater?" He said I should come again on May 22nd because by then he would have compiled the report and enclosed the statutes.

May 22, 1786 – I returned on May 22nd and he had compiled one report, to which I added the two reports from the administration regarding W[illem] Martens and H[Heinrich] Eidse. Thus, the government could see what bad people Albrecht and Bestvater were. The statutes were enclosed with the reports and mailed to the government that same day. I also had to include all the original copies of the statements and directives. The Sieberts were also supposed to submit the rescript from the King, as well as the letter from Administrator Dammer to the 5 congregations. However, they have not done that (although they promised).

I sent a summary recollection about this matter to the government on May 20th. I have copies of the papers dealing with all these circumstances in safekeeping.

N.B. I forgot to mention, that as the War Counselor Schlemmer had recommended, *Ohm* Sperling and I were to travel to Marienwerder in order to discuss our matter with the Honourable Vice President Schleinitz. On April 26th I travelled there with Sperling and spoke with him. He said that once the statutes would be sent over, the ruling would follow immediately.

May 29, 1786 – *Ohm* Sperling and *Ohm* Allert came to see me and brought the news that Hans Siebert had announced to the congregation that the royal government, at the request of the lawyer Mehlmann, had granted Koerber the permission to serve the Thiensdorf congregation with baptism and communion. The permission form was dated April 21st. We decided that *Ohm* Sperling should travel to see the government and urge them to prevent Koerber from carrying out these duties and wait long enough until unification between us can be achieved. I prepared a memorandum regarding that for the government, which Sperling took with him. The government, however, did not approve *Ohm* Sperling's request. Rather they gave him an answer in writing which did not serve him well and will be pleasing to the Sieberts. They put the focus on Sperling's own heart and whether it may be filled with hatred and thus not willing to go to communion. In conclusion they stated that this is a matter that no authority can order or prohibit, only God and one's conscience have dominion over this. As a result, they cannot do more than to appeal to the conscience of Koerber and Siebert, with the admonition: Wouldn't it

be better to refrain from serving holy communion for the time being? Afterwards, this document was sent to Koerber and Siebert.

July 1 and 2, 1786 – On July 1st and 2nd, the 3rd Sunday after Trinity Sunday, Koerber served the congregation in the Kleinwerder with baptism and communion. He complained about great weakness and on several occasions during the sermon at baptism, he drank of the baptismal water. Only a small number of people attended communion which was held on one day only.

Something to consider: I heard that Simon Bestvater from Platenhof wanted to bring his 2 sons to the Kleinwerder for baptism, and likewise Franz Quiring wanted to bring Cornelius Kaetler who was held back from baptism in 1782. I also heard that some from here wanted to participate in communion there. I travelled to Marienwerder on June 6th and talked with President Schleinitz about this. He sent Koerber an order not to accept anyone from other congregations for baptism or communion because this would only cause confusion and add more fuel to the existing dispute. From this our agitators can see that it is not that easy to follow their own will and without cause, separate from the congregation.

August 22, 1786 – *Ohm* Sperling notified me on August 22nd that his likeminded brethren were pressuring him to conduct a baptism and serve communion. I sent him a reply and have saved a copy of the letter.

September 4, 1786 – There was a meeting on September 4th at Koczelitzke to finalize the arrangements for the new King's ascendance to the throne on the occasion of his coronation in Koenigsberg. Our old King Frederick II died on August 17th at 75 years of age. He had reigned for 45 years. Since the tribute celebration for Crown Prince Frederick Wilhelm becoming the King of Prussia on the 19th of September was set, Cornelius Warkentin, Minister of the Flemish congregation in Rosenort, and I travelled to Koenigsberg. We left on September 14th from Elbing, stayed overnight at the Long Inn and arrived safe and sound in Koenigsberg on the 15th in the evening. We stayed with Heinrich Penner, Deacon in that congregation, who lived on the Haber Berge [Haberberg, part of Koenigsberg]. The next day we talked with Minister *Ohm* Wilhelm Zimmermann, and were compelled to preach the following morning, Sunday [September 17th]. *Ohm* C[ornelius] Warkentin preached on Psalm 119: 71. In the afternoon at 3 o'clock the King entered the city on horseback, accompanied by the merchant community whose young workers were dressed in red and yellow. The entry was very emotional and quite touching.

September 18, 1786 – On Monday we talked with his Excellence Minister of State von Hertzberg and asked him if he could facilitate a meeting with the King, at which time we wanted to ask him for confirmation of our *Privilegium* of Grace. The Minister of State said we would have to come to the tribute celebration because our opportunity to ask for confirmation of our *Privilegium* of Grace depended on that. Because the plan for the celebration had already

been finalized and presented to the King, it was rather late, however, he would still try to help us. He and the Royal Chancellor von Finkenstein considered the matter together with the King, and we attended the tribute celebration, *Ohm* Warkentin, *Ohm* W[ilhelm] Zimmermann, Dirk Jantzen, Abram Rosefeld from Lithuania whom we met in Koenigsberg, and I. I have prepared a separate description of the whole circumstance surrounding the celebration.

September 23, 1786 – On September 23rd *Ohm* C[ornelius] Warkentin and I arrived home safely.

October 1, 1786 – [In the diary this entry appears after the October 9th entry.] On the 16th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, that is October 1st, I held the sermon for the tribute celebration, basing it on 1. Peter 2: 17. I copied out the sermon after I had preached it.

October 9, 1786 – On October 9th I got the news from *Ohm* Sperling that he had received instruction from the government that all the statutes and the report of the dispute with the 5 congregations had been sent to Berlin yet while the highly respected King was alive and that this King would probably soon issue a decree.

N.B. As per an order from the King we had to hold a funeral sermon on September 17th, the 14th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, for the highly respected King. The sermon preached by *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau was based on 1. Chronicles 17: 8. [“I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies before you; and] I will make for you a name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.” I was in Koenigsberg at the time.

October 24, 1786 – I had heard from *Ohm* Sperling that the statutes and report of the dispute had been sent to our community [*Koste*], and so I decided to write to Minister von Hertzberg in Berlin about that. I wanted to ask him for a ruling on the disputes which may be accompanied by serious enforcements. I did that on October 24th.

The fact that I had participated in the tribute celebration, irritated the Sieberts and was problematic for them. Their followers pointed it out to them. However, when Hans Siebert got the notice from *Ohm* Sperling that he should come to the meeting in Koczelitzke, he didn't come. Without a doubt it was because he was ashamed to appear with the Flemish ministers.

November 16, 1786 – On November 16th an incident occurred that caused a stir and fear among our uninformed people, but brought much joy among the adherents of other religions. Our new King had sent out a new order that the names of all people young and old, Mennonites and others and also the women should be recorded. It was also to be notated who had a canton exemption and how that exemption had been attained. Thereupon, the city treasurer Urbanski came from Neuteich to the Milchbude and compiled the list. However, for his entertainment he measured up the people, including the Mennonites. Since this was a violation of our religious

freedom, I reported this to the War Counselor Schlemmer in Marienburg who was going to make a complaint about this to the city treasurer.

November 22, 1786 – On November 22nd I received a letter from the Honourable Mayor from Neuteich inviting me to come to the Milchbude at 8 o'clock in the morning on that same day. I went there; he had called together all the Mennonites from Neuteicherwalde. In my presence he questioned them on the measuring up process conducted by the treasurer and everything was recorded for a report. All the Mennonites and I had to sign the report. The next day the Mennonites were required to come to Neuteich to be in the presence of the treasurer. He could not deny anything regarding the abuse directed at the people, that he had measured them up against the room door (on which he marked the measurement with a pencil). Those who came late were additionally penalized with a fine of 6 *Groschen*. He admitted everything, except the comment he made, "You Mennonites are going to the dogs; till now it has only trickled down but from now on it will rain down on you." He tried to deny those words. However, the Mennonites countered with the response, that he had said that. The report has been sent to the treasury. I did not want revenge to be exacted on the city treasurer. Rather, I appealed to the mayor in the Milchbude, to only announce publicly to the Mennonites and Lutherans that the city treasurer had acted unjustly and the Mennonites need not live in fear and the Lutherans also should not gloat. Thus, any punishment for the city treasurer was abandoned.

January 6, 1787 – At the beginning of this year we experienced great joy for which we cannot thank God enough. It happened as follows.

When we were in Koenigsberg last year and received the royal favour to be included in the tribute celebration, and thereby our *Privilegium* of Grace was confirmed, we offered our thanks to the Minister von Hertzberg, because it was not suitable for it to happen with the King. A while later I had the idea that it might be nice to send the king a note of thanks. I passed this idea on to the congregation in Elbing and Koenigsberg who endorsed it. The people from Koenigsberg immediately prepared a handwritten note and sent it over to me to see if it was satisfactory. It was a note of thanks for the grace that was shown, congratulations for a blessed reign etc. and a plea for protection and grace. The note which was brief and concise was sent to the King by mail at the beginning of this year. This written note was sent with the blessing of God, resulting in the King manifesting a gracious disposition in dealing with our lowly people, something no one would have imagined. On January 6th he sent a handwritten note with his own signature addressed to the Mennonite churches in East and West Prussia, to the congregation in Koenigsberg. It read:

"His Royal Majesty of Prussia accepts the devout congratulations of all the Mennonite congregations in East and West Prussia with that same delight, whereby you will at every opportunity be shown graciousness and protection, and I hereby make it known to you."

Frederick Wilhelm
Berlin, January 6, 1787

The *Ohms* from Koenigsberg sent me the written note, legally authenticated, which pleased us greatly. Would that our people would honour God in return, with an upright life.

Several people who allowed themselves to be persuaded by our opponents to sign in opposition to us, have notified us and asked to be forgiven for this. Because they were sorry and promised to be obedient members of the congregation, we have granted them this and presented it to the brethren. Those who reached out included Jacob Jantzen who wanted to marry the daughter of Willem Martens, Heinrich Rode from Neuteicherwalde, and Peter Meckelburger from Burwalde.

This greatly irritated those at the head of the unrest. Despite their hard work and effort, they could not stop this from happening.

February 20, 1787 – In the month of February it was decided by the Flemish and our ministry, that I together with Cornelius Warkentin from Rosenort, a Minister in the Flemish congregation, should travel to Berlin to see if we could obtain the right to purchase property settled by Lutherans, without authorization. We began our travels on February 20th to Danzig on *Fastnacht* Day [Shrove Tuesday or Fat Tuesday]. From there we drove to Berlin with 3 horses and a covered wagon (which was accepted from waggoner Schultz). We arrived there safely on March 1st and stayed at the residence of the widowed Councillor *Frau* Gerscheimin located on the *Judenstrasse*.

We were not able to obtain the right to purchase property because many complaints from the Lutheran clergy and the military stance were in opposition to us, but our *Privilegium* was confirmed by the King and had his personal signature. Our departure happened on May 9th with the special mail. We arrived home safely on May 17th, Ascension Day. May God be praised. I have described our accomplishments and the details separately.

June 6, 1787 – N.B. Because *Ohm* Sperling, along with his fellow ministers and likeminded brethren could not allow themselves to be served by Koerber, they urged the government to allow me to serve them with baptism and communion. I received an order, dated the 6th of June 1787, that I should carry out the sacraments in the Thiensdorf congregation, alternately with Koerber, so that everyone could receive and benefit from the edification through the service of one or the other. *Ohm* Sperling called upon the baptismal candidates who did not want to be baptized by Koerber and there were 17 in total. The Sieberts persisted with the government that I not be allowed to come into their church building, that Sperling should go to the Orlofffeld congregation, and that H[ans] Siebert be confirmed as Bishop. The younger Clas Bestvater from our congregation also went to Marienwerder, no doubt to work out the possibility that his brothers could be baptized by Koerber. I have not yet heard anything about what they had arranged. They have been rejected.

As soon as I received the order, I wrote to *Ohm* H[ans] Siebert and informed him that I would serve those people in the Thiensdorf congregation who side with *Ohm* Sperling, with baptism and communion. I asked him if there was a solution to establishing unity with his ministry? I wanted to be helpful. If not however, then I would serve the people with *Ohm* Sperling, but *Ohm* Siebert was not to look upon this as a means to separation because that would not be my choice.

[July 8, 1787] – Because they rejected the unification, I served 17 people with baptism on the 5th Sunday after Trinity Sunday. There were many worshippers because my name was so well known because of the conflict. God granted me grace so that I was able to conduct the baptism in a manner that elicited many tears, even from my opponents. *Ohm* Siebert was there with whom I discussed unification which he also pledged to bring about. He announced to the congregation that on the coming Saturday Koerber would come and serve the congregation with baptism and the following day, that is the 6th Sunday after Trinity Sunday [July 15, 1787], serve communion. I announced that I would serve holy communion to the congregation on the 7th Sunday after Trinity Sunday [July 22, 1787].

Something to take note of: The younger Simon Bestvater from Tiegenhagen, the son of the elder Simon Bestvater from Platenhof (who during the conflict regarding acceptance raged against me, had made it public that he could probably kill or murder me), came to me himself and begged me to forgive him for that. He had said it out of zealousness. Peter Nickel from Tiegenhagen also got in touch with me, as well as Hans Schmit who worked for Schroeter in Orloff said they both regretted having signed up in opposition to me.

We had a meeting at the Gurcke [Heubuden] at the home of *Ohm* C[ornels] Regier and calculated the expenses of the Berlin trip and the tribute celebration, as well as the cost of the free purchases of the people from Elbing since 1783. It amounted to 36 Prussian *Groschen* per *Hube*. The Sieberts incited the *Ohms* from the Culm, Graudenz and Stuhm congregations not to help pay for the expenses, but since they have no reason for not helping, everything will probably turn out alright. *Ohm* C[ornelius] Warkentin and I were to receive 18 *Ducaten* each for the tribute celebration trip and journey to Berlin.

July 16, 1787 – N.B. On July 16th I received a letter from the Honourable War Counselor von Schlemmer in Marienburg, saying that His Excellency the Minister von Hertzberg had given him an assignment. He was to purchase 12 young dairy cows for him, and that he should seek help regarding that from the two Mennonite men who had been in Berlin for an extended length of time. No doubt they would ensure that he got good cows. As a result, he was trying to accomplish that.

[July 22, 1787] – On the 7th Sunday after Trinity Sunday I served those that were like-minded with us in the Thiensdorf congregation with holy communion. *Ohm* Siebert also attended but

he made no mention of the unification issue because Koerber had probably convinced him to put it out of mind. Cornels Albrecht together with Simon Bestvater, both rabble-rousers from our congregation had also been there. The following week they travelled to Marienwerder to see the government and (as I heard) ask for the freedom to have Koerber come into our congregation and serve them and their small group of followers with baptism and communion. I hope that they will be refused in the same manner as the Sieberts. The latter have been told that they should not come to Marienwerder again regarding this matter or they would be considered as rebels and punished accordingly.

[August 5, 1787] – On the 9th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, the cows that Friesen from Marienau bought as well as those that *Ohm* Sperling bought in the Kleinwerder were assembled in Tiegenhof. Because a few of the Kleinwerder cows were too old and 2 of those that Friesen bought were too young, the War Counselor switched those out and bought others in their place. Among them he bought a big cow with a calf and paid 13 ½ *Reichsthaler*. The man's name was Klingenberg and the average price for a cow was 12 *Reichsthaler*. As soon as the next day the cows were wrangled and driven to Berlin.

September 30, 1787 – On September 30th I got news from *Ohm* Siebert, that there was going to be a meeting held at his place on October 5th. Because I was scheduled to celebrate communion in our congregation on October 7th I did not travel to the meeting. No progress was made on the unification issue because Koerber, as was his custom, talked badly about adult baptism. He held child baptism in parity with adult baptism as was clear from his comments that he considered it unjust that those who were baptized as children had to be baptized again in our congregations, and that child baptism was just as valid etc. *Ohm* Sperling had reminded him a couple of times that he should think about what he said. Since he did not stop, *Ohm* Sperling responded that either way Koerber could not be recognized as a Mennonite bishop. Koerber became very indignant about this although Sperling claimed it was due to his spoken word. Then they parted.

Afterward I heard that Koerber and his gang had been to see the authorities again regarding separation from us. Whether they will be successful, only time will tell, but I will keep completely silent.

[December 26, 1787] – On the middle day of Christmas, Gilles Jantzen (who previously was from Rosenkranz, but now is living in Ellerwald or Kanitzky near Marienwerder) came to see me with an *Attest*, dated the 30th of March 1784, from a [*Unterofficir*] *Frau* von Graudantz, from Griesheim in the Palatinate. In it the Minister from there, Lehmann, testified that she was of the Mennonite faith and requested that she be accepted into the congregation here. The woman had shown *Ohm* Koerber the *Attest* but he didn't want to accept her. I directed her back to Koerber again because she could not make her stay permanent in our congregation.

I also became aware that the Sieberts had written to the King again regarding the authorization of Hans Siebert as Bishop. I had remained silent for 1 ½ years and so I now wrote to the royal government in Marienwerder and asked for a resolution of the conflict and intervention to prevent separation which Koerber would actively pursue with the election of Siebert. This letter was only mailed on January 3rd, 1788.

More to consider: Last year when I attended the tribute celebration in Koenigsberg I became acquainted with an educated man, Ernst Maier, who had been born in Swedish Pomerania. He had scruples regarding baptism and came up with the notion that he wanted to be baptized. He had many compelling discussions with me about that and I have carried on an exchange of letters with him about the topic. In 1787 he was ordained as a Lutheran pastor in Kladiau in the Balgen province not far from Koenigsberg. Nevertheless, he wrote me on September 7th of this year and asked me about baptism. I have saved those letters as well as my replies.

N.B. This year the exodus of Mennonites to Russia began, which is supposed to proceed next spring. They have realized an agreement with the Empress, on behalf of the Mennonites in Danzig. I have placed a copy of the agreement with our congregational records.

January 3, 1788 – At the beginning of this year I heard that the Sieberts had written to the King regarding the installation of H[ans] Siebert as bishop. Because this would be grounds for a separation I wrote to the government and asked for a resolution of the conflict. I got notice that the King had sent the petition from the Sieberts to the government and ordered them to make a decision in the matter and that the government completely denied them the option of separation. Afterward I heard that the King ordered the government, to compile the circumstances surrounding the conflict from the statutes, and then send him a report of that.

There was an unusual happening that may still have some consequences in its train. Two Mennonites from Danzig, one by the name of Bartsch from our people [Frisian] and the other by the name of Heppner from the Flemish, had made their way to Russia. There they drew up an agreement for the purchase of 1,080 *Huben* [about 44 thousand acres] of land from Prince Potemkin, Governor of the land of Kuban. This was for 270 households, each receiving 4 *Huben* and these were to be exclusively Mennonites. A certain *Herr* Trappe also came from Russia to Danzig, who, at the instruction of the Empress, was to expedite the emigration of the Mennonites.

Because the terms of the land deal were so favourable, many Mennonites from the Elbing, Marienburg and Tiegenhof areas approached the administrative chamber and inquired about moving to Russia. The people from Elbing were the first; they received the instruction that if they paid the tithe, they would receive passes. They allowed the municipal court to take hold of their land and property, paid the fee, sold their cattle and household utensils and made ready to travel. Before they realized their mistake, an order came from the Cabinet Ministry in Berlin

that they were not going to be allowed to emigrate. Since these people had gotten rid of their possessions and for the most part were renters, they ended up in deep poverty. Therefore, Cornelius Warkentin and I wrote to His Excellency Count von Hertzburg and presented the facts surrounding this case, how these people were betrayed by the administrative chamber causing them to lose all their possessions. This happened on April 23rd and these people were also required to write to the Cabinet Ministry. The total number of those from the Elbing area who had given up their property and paid the fee amounted to 77 households, totalling 461 persons. This did not happen in the Marienburg and Tiegenhof areas because our Honourable War Counselor von Schlemmer did not want to allow it until the King had authorized the freedom to emigrate.

May 1, 1788 – On May 1st I received from Honourable Adler from Berlin, the petition which our opponents from the Kleinwerder sent to the Spiritual Department in Berlin. It was signed by Jacob Siebert and Jacob Pauls. I would have written there too, to refute all their lies, but the Honourable War Counselor von Schlemmer advised me to contact the government in Marienwerder.

May 5, 1788 – On May 5th I travelled to Marienwerder, talked with both *Herrn* Presidents regarding the false petition and asked for their defence. They gave me their assurance that I should remain calm because the prospects are good for our matter, etc.

An order regarding the emigration to Russia came from the King, saying that those who were not property owners were free to move there, but it should first be thoroughly investigated. The people who had already resolved to move did not wait for any investigation. They obtained passes from the Magistrate in Danzig by devious means (as if they were residents of Danzig). They travelled by sea and then on land to Riga in Livonia [Latvia in 1918] and from there were transported further into Russia. Because of Russia's current war with Sweden and the Turks, it made the migration very dangerous, but these people didn't allow themselves to be dissuaded. N.B. This year I had a booklet printed titled *Abendmahls Andachten* [sermons for communion] for the edification of our congregations. 500 booklets were printed on letter paper at 9 Prussian *Groschen* per copy and 700 booklets were printed on printing paper at 7 Prussian *Groschen* per copy. May the Lord bless my intentions to do it for the good of the church. I have also sent *Ohm* Hans Siebert in the Kleinwerder one of the booklets. This year the Sieberts sent a petition to the court on 3 occasions.

May 20, 1789 – [In the diary this entry follows June 14, 1789.] N.B. On May 20th I ordained Heinrich Roth, a Minister in the congregation in Danzig, to become a Bishop. At the beginning I preached a sermon based on Isaiah 62: 6-7.

[May 29, 1789] – On the Friday before Pentecost *Ohm* Sperling sent me a decision which had come from the government that H[ans] Siebert was to be installed as Bishop. Koerber was

conducting baptism and celebrating communion in the Thiensdorf congregation during the Holy Days and *Ohm* Sperling was uneasy that the installation would go ahead, so he said I should come to Marienburg on the eve of the feast day, which I had to refuse. On Pentecost Monday Jan Grunau came to see me and I arranged with him that I would come to Marienburg on Wednesday. I travelled there and talked with Honourable Krokisiur who told me that he had to be present at Siebert's installation on Friday and that *Ohm* Sperling with his *Ohms* should also be there. I replied that since Siebert did not initiate the unification letter, the *Ohms* could not be present at the installation and also could not recognize him as their Bishop. He said he would put that out there at the installation. Because they did not acknowledge it, *Ohm* Sperling did not attend. Hans Siebert was installed as Bishop by Koerber in the presence of Krokisiur.

Such deplorable circumstances energize the Sieberts and cause first the lawyer and afterward the judge to get involved in our congregational affairs. It is those who would give grounds to having Mennonites involved in military service; who would offend our Confession of Faith more: I or them? However, the Sieberts are betraying all of the Mennonite church as long as they can satisfy their self-will.

[June 14, 1789] – On the 1st Sunday after Trinity Sunday, after celebrating holy communion, we held a deacon election with the following candidates:

Franz Jantzen from Orloff	had 26 votes
Peter Dau from Orloff	had 28 votes
David Bestvater from Mierau	had 25 votes
Peter Pauls from Tiegerweide	had 25 votes

Therefore, Franz Jantzen and Peter Dau are called to the deacon ministry. May the Lord strengthen them with power from on high to effectively carry out their ministry.

June 26, 1789 – On June 26th I sent His Excellency Minister von Woelner an idea and persisted regarding valuing the acceptance of children from mixed marriages. Because H[ans] Siebert did not want to endorse the unity letter, *Ohm* Sperling and *Ohm* Allert visited the government and asked for the permission to have me continue to serve them with baptism and communion. Indeed, the government allowed it, but not in the Thiensdorf church building, because now that Siebert was Bishop, it could give cause for conflict. Sperling thought it would be better to delay the service a bit longer.

July 10, 1789 – On July 10th Hans Siebert got an order containing harsh words from the government, namely that he should not make it publicly known that he wanted to exclude from the congregation all family members from other religions or children from mixed marriages. As soon as the royal court allowed it, he would have to accept those who freely made that choice. If he should say that it was against his conscience, then he could not be a Mennonite bishop and the government would request the congregation to elect another bishop in his place who

would properly carry out the duties commensurate with the office and observant of the Mennonite articles of faith.

That is how the secular authorities have to impress upon this Mennonite bishop what his duties are. What a picture of misery. The papers of this incident are among the church documents.

September 18, 1789 – On September 18th the tribunal for the canton was held in Tiegenhof and the commanding officer brought into the court two Mennonites, by the name of Hans Penner from our congregation and Leonard Hamm from the Flemish congregation, who had both married Lutheran women. On the way there they came to see me. I made it known to Hans Penner that he would face church discipline because of his marriage but should, however, be accepted into the congregation again. Once the commanding officer saw the testimonial, he was released immediately. *Ohm* Dirk Thiessen, the Bishop of the Flemish congregation, was called upon regarding the case of Leonard Hamm. The commanding officer asked him if Leonard Hamm would be accepted into the congregation. *Ohm* Thiessen answered, “Yes! If his wife would also become Mennonite.” The officer replied, “Then he has been rejected by yourself and belongs to us.” Thus, he was detained. Early the next day Michael Hamm from Orloff came to see me and wanted my advice, as well as he wanted me to talk with the commanding officer, because *Ohm* Thiessen and Cornelis Warkentin from Rosenort would also be in Tiegenhof.

I turned down the request because the Flemish do not allow mixed marriages, and even though Penner was free, how could I help Leonard Hamm because he was not from our congregation. In the end C[ornelis] Warkentin had spun it in such a way that Leonard Hamm could be accepted into other congregations. Indeed, the commanding officer let him go but not before first giving him three lashes.

This is what happens when human decisions in the congregation are held sacred and the Flemish can begin on this point. Only time will tell how they will be able to help Leonard Hamm, whether she will become Mennonite or whether they will accept him. They wanted me to announce that I would accept him, but I renounced that entirely. Afterward I got a letter from *Ohm* Thiessen in which he requested of me to accept Leonard Hamm into our congregation. I wrote back to him and turned it down, but I also wrote about it to *Ohm* Corn[elis] Regier in Heubuden and Cornelis Warkentin in Rosenort. I have kept copies of all the letters.

November 9, 1789 – A dispute arose again between Hans Siebert from Thiensdorf and our congregation. Allert, whom I had baptized in 1784 with authorization from the royal government, came to see me and asked for an *Attest* because he was going to take up residence in the Kleinwerder. He got it on November 9th. Nevertheless, Hans Siebert did not want to accept it under the pretext that he would have to think about it first. The main reason was, however, that he wanted to assert himself in the unity letter from 1784, in which he together with other congregations firmly stated that they would not accept anyone born of a mixed marriage through an *Attest*. Since it is impossible to work with these stubborn people, I made the decision to send a petition regarding this matter, along with the *Attest* to the royal

government, with a request that the government prepare the *Attest* with an order, that he accept it and recognize Allert as a member.

December 11, 1789 – I received a decision on December 11th in which the government notified me that they had sent the original *Attest* to Siebert with a strict command to carry it out. What he will do, only time will tell. If he has to accept the *Attest*, then the unity letter will have a big tear in it.

In December a printed Edict emerged from Berlin regarding the Mennonite presence in Prussia and was publicized in all the churches. It obligated the Mennonites to pay taxes for clergy and for churches. It prohibited the further purchase of new property under certain conditions. Conversion to the Mennonite religion was not denied those of other religious persuasions, but the canton administrator had to enforce strict terms. The children from mixed marriages who for the purpose of instruction in other religions, were to be held back from that because they, according to the faith principles of the majority of Mennonite ministers, did not belong in Mennonite congregations.

Thus, the unscrupulousness of the ministers from the 5 congregations has come to light. The children from mixed marriages are suffering deprivation under false pretenses and a misrepresentation of their freedom of conscience and are being delivered into the hands of the military. I hope, however, that this statement will yet be changed.

An Update

I reported on page ninety-seven [July 10, 1789] that the government had given Siebert a strict order about the refusal to accept family members of other religious persuasions. In response, Siebert sent the government a defense in which he dwells on his uprightness in this matter and says it is to his benefit to obey the authorities and Sperling only wanted to denigrate his name in front of the government by falsely slandering him. He maintained that he never refused to accept those from other religions and the like.

If you only look at his report in the coming year on page 100 [June 2, 1790], he shows himself as a liar, which is a bad character trait for a bishop. However, one finds much of the same in himself and his cohorts in this dispute.

June 2, 1790 – On June 2nd I received back the *Attest* regarding C[ornelius] Allert, from H[ans] Siebert on behalf of himself and those supporting him in his congregation. I immediately returned it with the notice that I am not under Siebert's authority nor that of other congregations, and therefore the *Attest* was returned.

Some time ago *Ohm* Sperling had checked with the government regarding the holding of a special service in the home of Jan Pauls in Kirschwald. The regional committee had to look into whether the quarrels could be resolved. Thus, Siebert and Sperling were summoned. Siebert declared up front that he and his congregation had once and for all come to an understanding regarding the acceptance of family members from other religions, because that was very close to their conscience. Thus, he explained that he approved Sperling's request and promised that if Sperling received the authorization to build a new church for the service, they would pay out

the necessary amount of funds from the Thiensdorf church. This report was sent to the government.

Thereafter Sperling got the authorization and I was sanctioned to administer the sacraments in the home of the aforementioned Jan Pauls. On the other hand, Siebert had to cover the costs and received a reiterating harsh admonition and a further order not to exclude from his congregation, any family members of other religious persuasions. One can see how antagonistic his actions are. I have described on page 99 [Dec 11, 1789] how Siebert justified himself and called Sperling a liar, and now in the report he speaks very differently.

[June 27, 1790] – On the 4th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, after I had introduced the articles of faith to the youth the previous day, I baptized 13 young people in the predetermined house in Kirschwald and on July 6th I administered communion.

On the same Sunday as I served with baptism in Krebswald, Siebert, in the presence of both Bishops Koerber and Ewert, announced to the congregation in Thiensdorf that because the government had ousted Sperling and his followers from the church in Thiensdorf, it had become necessary to elect other ministers and deacons. This is what happened then, an invented falsehood on the part of the three bishops.

Sperling reported this to the government and at the same time asked about the building of a new church. The government took great offense at the behaviour of Siebert and made known their decision that a separation would never be allowed. Rather, Krokisiur was to conduct another investigation and tone down the strongheaded, and also to threaten Siebert, the motivating force behind the schism, with demotion and complete removal from office.

[August 29, 1790] – In response, a commission met on the 13th Sunday after Trinity Sunday in the church building. Present were bishops, ministers, etc. from all the congregations. I had to champion baptism again. Siebert's followers wanted to have in the minutes, the assurance that mixed marriages had been done away with, and maintained that a repetition of baptism was a hindrance in the acceptance process. I responded to everything in accordance with our confession of faith. As soon as the Commissionaire was gone, Koerber renounced *Ohm* Sperling's minister role because of some blasphemy he was to have included in a sermon in the year 1785. Afterward he prepared a dismissal document with the other bishops and on Saturday had one of the women deliver it to his home. Since it was *Ohm* Sperling's turn to preach on Sunday, he went to Siebert and told him that he wouldn't pay any regard to the dismissal and would nevertheless preach, which he did.

The report was sent to the government immediately, and Sperling was able to add information on Koerber's actions. Thereafter, the government sent a strict directive to Krokisiur to let Siebert and all his supporters know that those who were supportive and obedient regarding the acceptance issue would be left alone completely, but those who would stop the acceptance process should be imprisoned. He was to remove Bishop H[ans] Siebert from his office until the

decision from the Royal Court was received. If Siebert should carry on with certain dealings, then he should be arrested immediately.

In response, Siebert's party decided to send 2 representatives to Berlin, by the name of Jacob Siebert and Jacob Martens. They caused the split in the Thiensdorf congregation. Since the royal government was supportive of the Sperling adherents the outcome forced the Siebert group to pay the Sperling group 5000 *Reichsthaler* Prussian currency. This was so that they could build their new church, for which they received permission from the King. The compromise agreement regarding this was drawn up in Thiensdorf.

N.B. I have a separate report on the commission.

The representatives of Siebert found much opposition in Berlin because it appeared to the officials as if they wanted to stymie freedom of conscience. They [the officials] reached the conclusion that freedom of conscience could not be hindered because the Mennonite Bishop Donner allowed access to the Mennonite Church in Orloff. Thereafter, the West Prussian government was to give their opinion, which read, "If the King yielded to the petition of the 5 congregations, then the separation had to go ahead in Thiensdorf, because Sperling could not have fellowship with Siebert." The separation indeed followed hereafter. I have received no indication of a separation.

April 21, 1791 – At the beginning of the year Siebert's representatives arrived home from Berlin after having been away for 15 weeks. After that the separation accord between Siebert's party and Sperling's group was agreed to on April 21st in front of a commission and signed by both parties. There were 437 people on Siebert's side and 99 on Sperling's side. In this accord the Sieberts are doing away with the *Aussentrau* and do not want to accept any person [born of a mixed marriage]. We, on our side, maintain that the privilege of accepting family members from other religious persuasions along with mixed marriages will not only be granted by the King, but their acceptance is in accordance with our faith principles.

May 13, 1791 – This information together with the statements of the accord, in consideration of the congregation in Thiensdorf, were sent to the West Prussian government and confirmed on May 13th. Each party received an original copy of the agreement and I made a copy and included it with our other church documents.

How poorly the bishops and ministers of the 5 congregations have acted, such that they deprive themselves of their freedom, allowing it to be prescribed judicially. At the same time, however, our confession and freedom are confirmed. Without a doubt there will yet arise among them much disruption.

Sperling's group immediately went after the payout of the 5000 *Reichsthaler* from the Thiensdorf congregation, and building themselves a new church in Markushof. In the meantime, they are conducting their services in private homes where they can be accommodated.

The Siebert's party has invested a lot of hard work to fight back against the building of the church in Markushof. Since they were not allowed to approach the authorities regarding this issue, they went to the Lutheran Minister in Thiensdorf and asked him to use as a pretext, that the new church was too close to the Lutheran one. However, the Minister dismissed them. Actually, Jacob Peters, a Lutheran neighbour, dissuaded the Minister.

That is the product of twelve years of resistance regarding baptism, which the 5 congregations have carried out against me. They have caused me much trouble, but the truth could not be suppressed. I can rightly say, "Although these bishops from the 5 congregations were the instruments through which the principles of our faith were reviled, and many people were seduced and blinded, they, nevertheless, were not able to achieve their goal, namely to crush our religion. Truth conquers all."

O truth, no swarm of confused people can take away your victory!
The Christian who embraces you need never to blush with shame,
He can rightly say, if I want to please everyone,
I would not be worthy of pleasing anyone.
I choose truth and defend her and abhor factiousness.

O truth, heaven's radiance from the Lord,
Remain close for my salvation
Rise up in my soul!
That I can know well my goal
And choose right paths.

December 25, 1791 – When the church in Markushof was complete, that ministerial asked me if I could preach the first sermon there. That happened on Christmas Day in the presence of a large audience made up of people of various convictions, including many of Siebert's supporters. My introductory remarks were based on Isaiah 66: 1-2 about the proper use of a house of God. My sermon text was from 1. Kings 8: 55-61 about the true praise offering of a Christian for the freedom to have public worship services.

1. Where does such a praise offering come for?
 - a) It comes from the recognition of the blessings received from God, according to verses 55 and 56.
2. What is included in the praise offering?
 - b) Included in the praise offering is a glorious prayer for God's help, according to verses 57-58, a fervent wish for a merciful answer to prayer and a spreading of the Word, verses 59-60, with the firm intention to fully dedicate oneself to the service of a benevolent God, verse 61.

[January 7, 1792] – On the day before the first Sunday after Epiphany, in the church in Markushof, I went through the list of the articles of faith with the youth in order to receive their affirmation. The introductory remarks were based on Matthew 16: 24. The sermon text was from Romans 10: 10; the closing remarks from Hosea 2: 19-20.

[January 8, 1792] – The following day, the first Sunday after Epiphany, I administered water baptism to 10 youth and accepted them into the congregation. The opening remarks were from Matthew 10: 32-33; the sermon text from Matthew 28: 18-29. The closing remarks came from Psalm 103: 1-3 and Colossians 1: 12-14, with an exhortation, from the Gospel of Luke 2: 49, to the parents and youth regarding regular attendance at church services.

[January 22, 1792] – On the 3rd Sunday after Epiphany I celebrated holy communion in the congregation in Markushof and after the sermon an election for bishop, to be chosen from the ministers, was held.

Johann Sperling had	68 votes
Dirk Allert had	2 votes
Peter Grunau had	0 votes
Corn[elius] Philippsen had	0 votes

The installation of Johann Sperling as Bishop was scheduled for the 14th [of February] although a heavy spring thaw delayed it.

[February 26, 1792] – On Invocavit Sunday [first Sunday in Lent] I installed minister Joh[ann] Sperling as Bishop of the congregation in Markushof. There was a large gathering with people from various religious persuasions. My sermon was based on Isaiah 62: 6-7.

[March 4, 1792] – On Reminiscere Sunday I accepted the wife of David Bestvater through water baptism, upon her confession to the Mennonite faith. She was from Muegenhahl in the Danzig Werder, from the Reformed church and received an *Attest* for the Danzig congregation. I had received the permission for this acceptance from the royal government in Marienwerder and was requested by the Danzig congregation to carry it out.

After the sermon I shared with the assembly the authorization from the government, the letter from the Danzig congregation, as well as the *Attest* I gave to the woman. In the process I took the opportunity to thank my congregation that they had faithfully stood with me during these times of tribulation and encouraged them to offer gratitude to God.

Further, I admonished the small number of members who got caught up in the confusion and were still distancing themselves from the congregation, to return, because they could now clearly see that the statements about being drafted into the military if people from other religious persuasions were accepted, and about being chased out of the country because of infant baptism, were completely false. I silently wondered if, to soothe their conscience, they might return to us. We did not expect any reconciliation for all their disruptive activity in the

congregation, because we had enough repayment: not only had the truth of our religion triumphed with God's help but can also now be freely exercised.

Heinrich Mekelburger had heard about this offer from other people. He let it be known that he would like to return to being a minister in the congregation after having been gone since 1785. I visited him and found him open to returning. I discussed matters with him and we established unity between us.

[August 5, 1792] – On the 9th Sunday after Trinity Sunday I shared about the unity between us with the brethren and announced that Mekelburger would resume his deacon ministry and take his place in the congregation again. Everything has its beginning and also its end. When one has taken a point far enough, it is a wise thing to seek correction and admonition.

[August 19, 1792] – On the 11th Sunday after Trinity Sunday Mekelburger and his wife returned to the service.

N.B. This year I have also arranged to print the instruction booklets for baptismal candidates. May the Lord give his blessing to this endeavour. I have had 500 copies printed in Marienwerder, each booklet costing 92 *Danziger* currency.

[December 1792] - In the month of December, I received a package of letters from Russia. They were addressed to a variety of acquaintances in all the congregations, including a circular letter for all the congregations in Prussia. In the latter, they reported that they had disputes with Jan Clas who had moved there from Rosenkranz, and asked for advice and assistance. I have sent all the letters to their appropriate destinations.

I have sent another letter to Russia on behalf of our congregation and also kept a copy thereof.

August 19, 1793 – On August 19th *Ohm* Heinrich Roth from Danzig came to see me with two gentlemen from Lower Silesia. The one was *Herr* von Eckartsberg, the Royal Chamberlain, and also the administrator of the rural District of Sprottau. The other was the Baron von Lestwitz, Knight of the Order of Saint John [*Johanniter*] and Lord of Oberschirn, and a great favourite of the King. These gentlemen had travelled to Danzig on mail delivery horses and from Danzig to Elbing with waggoner's horses. They wanted to see the area in which the Mennonites lived and spend a night at the home of a Mennonite and inquire about their situation.

The gentlemen were very friendly and I accompanied them the other day as far as Lupushorst, from there they drove to Elbing. The Baron seriously wondered why the Mennonites' ownership of land was restricted. He advised me, I should first travel to Danzig to talk about it with the Supreme President von Schroetar, then on to the Minister von Werder, and lastly to approach the King. He promised that he would offer as much help as he could elicit from the King.

September 3, 1793 – I spoke with the Supreme President on September 3rd and he rejected my request entirely. Thereupon I wrote to the Baron and received a reply telling me to write to the Minister von Werder immediately and ask for the freedom to purchase additional properties.

November 1, 1793 – I wrote the letter about the land purchase on November 1st, but what followed was a negative reply. *Herr* Baron whom I reported this to, wrote that I should now just remain calm because the King is just too preoccupied at present with the war against France.

February 22, 1794 – On February 22nd Baron von Lestwitz had written to *Ohm* Roth and urged him to purchase several cows for him from here. *Ohm* Roth only sent me the letter on May 9th and I assuaged the situation with the Baron. Therefore, he wanted the cows for the fall, but because the revolt led by [Thaddeus] Kosciusko broke out in Poland, nothing became of it. I corresponded with the Baron regarding the land restriction policy the Mennonites had to abide by.

March 14, 1794 – This year Corn[els] Regier, Bishop in Heubuden, together with Corn[elius] Warkentin, Minister from Rosenort, travelled to Russia to put things in order in the church there. Corn[els] Regier died there, but before that happened, he affirmed Warkentin as Bishop, who then put everything in order and returned home. It became an expensive journey and bore little fruit because soon there was division again among the people. They left on March 14th and Warkentin returned in September. He also administered baptism and served communion in our church there.

June 10, 1794 – On the 3rd day of Pentecost I received a notice from the administrative office that the following day His Excellency the Royal Minister von Voss, with a private financial advisor [von Schultz], and three war advisors from Berlin would be travelling to Elbing and were inclined to see a Mennonite Church, as well as a dairy. I arranged with *Ohm* C[ornelius] Grunau to welcome them, which then happened the following day at 9 o'clock in the morning. Their Excellencies were very unassuming and toured our church as well as had a look at Heinrich Mekelburger's cows. They inquired about our principles of faith, so I shared with them copies of the booklet of communion sermons and the baptismal instruction booklet. They enjoyed receiving them. At the home of *Ohm* Grunau, they ate buttered bread and drank sweet milk. This year we sent money to the church at Markushof. The collection amounted to 555 *Florin*, 15 *Groschen* in Prussian currency.

September 1794 – In the month of September our minister Corn[elius] Grunau passed away at 62 years of age, after having been active in the preaching and teaching ministry for 34 years. Because I was very ill at the time and he was not bed-ridden for long, the leave-taking was very grievous. May God grant joy to his soul.

According to *Ohm* Warkentin's report, there are supposed to be 300 Mennonite families in Russia, which turns out to be somewhat more than 1400 persons, not counting those living in the Ukraine.

June 4, 1795 – With the help of the *Ohms* from the Tiegenhagen and Heubuden congregations I bought 20 individual pregnant cows and one mature bull and 1 Hockling bull [approximately 1 year old] for the Baron von Lestwitz. As per his request he wanted Mennonites to transport them to his estate “*Ober Tohirn*” in Silesia. The local price per head of cattle was on average 21 *Reichsthaler* Prussian currency.

They left Orloff on June 4th and arrived on June 24th. The people were well received; the costs for them and their horses were covered. We informed the Baron of the price of the cattle and Samuel Bestvater, who was along as the overseer of the operation, was responsible for submitting the transportation costs to him.

S[amuel] Bestvater received a daily payment of 3 Prussian *Florin*, the other three each received 2 Prussian *Florin* per day. The congregations did not want to charge this to the Baron’s account and the people were not supposed to ask for it. On his own the Baron gave each person 37 ½ Prussian *Florin* as a gift, and the payment for the cattle was received in Danzig in the form of bank notes which we then exchanged. The levy for our congregations amounted to 13 Prussian *Groschen* per *Hube*.

1796 – The East Prussian, West Prussian and Lithuanian administrative chambers issued releases to the Mennonite congregations in which the King totally forbade the emigration of the Mennonites. He directed them to expand into the former Polish area in Lithuania not far from Bialystok. We, therefore, sent 3 delegates who had a passport from the West Prussian administration and a letter of recommendation for the administration in Bialystok. Once they arrived there, the President said they couldn’t be allocated any land because they had not received an order for that from the King. Thus, the trip was wasted.

At the end of this year Gerhard Wiebe, the Bishop of the congregation in Elbing and Ellerwald, passed away. He reached 72 years of age and had served the congregation for 45 years. He was a good man and I got along very well with him. The split in his congregation and the conflict experienced leading up to it, was a major contributing factor in his death. May God bless his soul.

[June 18, 1797] – On the first Sunday after Trinity Sunday we held a deacon election in our congregation. Peter Pauls from Tiegerweide and Corn[elius] Engbrecht from Orlofffeld were chosen.

[June 25, 1797] – On the second Sunday after Trinity Sunday I baptized in our congregation, the two surviving children of Minister Corn[elius] Focking from Amsterdam, who were residing in Danzig (because Bishop Heinrich Roth from Danzig was deceased [7 Jan 1797]). They submitted to me their testimony written in the Dutch language, and received an *Attest* from me for the Danzig congregation.

This year I received a directive from the administrative chamber, that in the future, the children of mixed marriages who wanted to become Mennonite, would be assigned certain responsibilities of military service by the chamber. I had just written to them about the two sons of Jacob Friesen from Brunau, who had a mother of the Reformed faith, and wanted to become Mennonite. I therefore informed the West Prussian government and also the chamber, that those who received permission to become Mennonite, could not have military responsibilities assigned to them, because then that person could no longer be a Mennonite. In that situation, I would not and could not accept the sons of Friesen. Thereupon I received the decision from the chamber that I could accept them, because they had received the instruction in the Mennonite faith before the Mennonite Edict had been issued.

Presumably, the freedom of whom to accept into the congregation can be taken from us. This year I served communion twice in the Danzig congregation.

November 16, 1797 – On the 16th of November our King Frederick Wilhelm II died, and his son King Frederick Wilhelm III ascended to the throne.

December 26, 1797 – On December 26th I sent congratulations, dated December 24th, to our King by mail from Tiegenhof. I received a gracious reply, dated the 31st of December. The congratulatory wish reads as follows:

“We, your humble servants, prostrate ourselves in deep reverence before your Honourable Royal Majesty at this year end, to offer our most loving congratulations on the occasion of our Honourable Royal Majesty’s ascendance to the supreme throne. No wishes are more heartfelt and fervent than ours, because our entire well-being is dependent on the great happiness brought about by being subject to the glorious and wise scepter of your Honourable Royal Majesty.

Therefore, we wish for our Honourable Royal Majesty perpetual happiness, to the highest of all your government: May God grant His Royal Majesty, as well as your dearest wife, Her Majesty the Queen, the pleasures of all desired wealth and rewards and also infinite years for the welfare of the whole country. Then our joyous hope will be satisfied in receiving grace and protection from our Honourable Royal Majesty, the wisest monarch, in regards to our religion and our sustenance in favourable measure, and may we enjoy them forever. We pledge our Honourable Royal Majesty all the loyalty and servility your righteous subjects are capable of, and eagerly look forward to the time, Honourable Royal Majesty, just as our immortalized ancestors, to give the highest of all our solemn promise of homage publicly and deepest reverence.”

Honourable Royal Majesty,

your humble servants, the Bishops and Ministers
of all the Mennonite congregations in West Prussia,
H[einrich] Donner, D[irk] Thiessen, C[ornelius] Warkentin
Orloff, Administrative Office Tiegenhof
In the Marienburg Grosswerder
December 24, 1797

The response from the King reads as follows:

“His Royal Majesty, our most gracious ruler, acknowledges the congratulations and good wishes, which the Bishops and Ministers of all the Mennonite congregations in West Prussia want to bring to light on the 24th of December at the approaching New Year, with gracious pleasure and does not fail to thank them, with the supreme assurance of your country’s father-like benevolence.”

Frederick Wilhelm
Berlin
December 31, 1797

I sent *Ohm* Sperling and *Ohm* Siebert copies of both letters.

December 29, 1797 – On December 29th I received a visit from our fellow brethren of the Neu Falkenstein congregation from imperial Galicia. The one was a minister by the name of Jacob Bergthold and the other a brother by the name of Christian Ewy. These people had travelled on foot as far as the Przechowka congregation. Some people from Heubuden brought them to me. Bergthold preached in our church on the last day of the year, December 31st, which fell on a Sunday. His sermon that day was based on Luke 19: 41-42 and the day thereafter, New Year’s Day, he preached on Hebrews 12: 12.

He was a man of 31 years who had been a minister for 10 years. His sermons were quite evangelical and very edifying, organized into particular statements that were clearly explained. He had a pleasant way with people and was open and without sanctimoniousness.

The congregation in Falkenstein, together with the Bergthold name can be found on the list of names from Holland. The members of that church are former members of congregations from the Rheinpfalz who have moved to Galicia and established a small congregation. They are united with us in the kingdom as are all congregations, and within the congregation they have the same confession of faith using the 35 questions.

He [Bergthold] also preached in all the Flemish congregations.

[January 6, 1798] – N.B. *Ohm* Cornelius Warkentin, the Flemish Bishop from Rosenort preached in our congregation on Epiphany, in the presence of Bergthold and Ewy.

January 21, 1798 – On January 21st Jacob Kliewer was elected as Bishop of the congregation in Neugarten, because the former Bishop Heinrich Roth had passed away.

April 1, 1798 – On April 1st, Palm Sunday, I installed Jacob Kliewer as Bishop. In the afternoon Minister Jacob Bergthold preached a sermon based on Numbers 21: 4-9 about the consideration of Jesus as the counter-image to the bronze snake.

[April 9, 1798] – On the second day of Easter [Monday], he [Bergthold] preached a farewell sermon in our midst based on Ephesians 6: 10-17. There was great emotion among the listeners because he was loved by the majority of the congregation. On the Wednesday after Easter I invited the *Ohms* to my home to bid our farewell to Bergthold. On the occasion we sang the hymns: *Thank the Lord, O Children of God* and *Bring to the Lord your Honour and Praise*. The next day I accompanied him as far as Tiegenhof to Ertmann Stobbe, and from there, because of poor roads, he walked to *Ohm* Cornelius Warkentin in Rosenort. In my home the parting from my wife, my children and myself was so painful, that we were all in tears and could hardly speak. I had to promise to come and see him in the Stuhm congregation on May 7th because he had received various things as gifts from all the congregations, which I was to bring him later. In all congregations a voluntary collection for him was gathered up and in our congregation 45 Dutch *Ducaten* were collected. That was in addition to the presentation of clothes and linens. The congregation had come upon hard times and now some (including Bergthold), because they had moved to Russia and then returned, were denied the protection of the emperor.

May 7, 1798 – On May 7th I, together with *Ohm* J[an] Quiring and *Ohm* Peter Dau, travelled to the Stuhm congregation. Bergthold had received a small Russian wagon and a horse from the congregation in Heubuden and he needed another one, so I gave him a Polish *Kunter* [horse] to hitch up with the other horse. We again said our farewells and I travelled home on May 9th.

May 14, 1798 – On May 14th we held a general meeting of all West Prussian congregations to finalize who would travel to Koenigsberg for the celebration of homage to the King. I did not want to accept it because of my weakened condition, but persons from all congregations strongly insisted upon it, so that I had to resolve to undertake it once again, together with *Ohm* Corn[elius] Warkentin. This gathering was large because people arrived from all the congregations, from Przechowka as far as Danzig; we received written submissions from Koenigsberg as well as Lithuania that likewise supported my travelling there. The former notified me that the Mennonites in Koenigsberg were denied attendance at the homage celebration. Since the celebration was scheduled for June 5th, *Ohm* Warkentin and I departed from home as soon as Pentecost, May 27th, and left from Elbing at 2 o'clock in the afternoon with a Mennonite waggoner by the name of Clas Wiebe, arriving in Koenigsberg on the second day of Pentecost at 7 o'clock in the evening. The church ministry had arranged for lodging with Minister Wilhelm Zimmerman. With the help and support of the lawyer His Excellency Earl von Finkenstein we received admittance to the homage celebration, immediately silencing the

attacks of our opponents and the gloating of the malicious people. The Lord be praised. We each received an identification certificate, of which exact copies remained in the private State Chancellery, indicating, according to our confession, that we had pledged our loyalty to the King. Should there be another homage celebration, one would just have to show this certificate to the State Chancellery and no one would be able to block our attendance at the celebration.

May 14, 1798 – [In the diary this entry follows July 19, 1798] On May 14th the following ministers and deacons gathered together at the home of *Ohm* Heinrich Donner in Orloffersfeld:

From the congregation in Orloffersfeld: Bishop Heinrich Donner
Minister Hans Horn
Minister Jan Quiring
Minister Peter Dau
Minister Kornelius Froese
Deacon Jacob Quiring
Deacon Heinrich Mekelburger
Deacon Franz Jantzen
Deacon Peter Pauls
Deacon Cornelius Engbrecht

From the congregation in Tiegenhagen: Bishop Dirk Thiessen
Minister Peter Kroeker

From the congregation in Rosenort: Bishop Cornelius Warkentin
Minister Abraham Siemens
Minister Abraham Siemens

From the congregation in Ladekopp: Minister Isaac Toews
Deacon Franz Klassen

From the congregation in Fuerstenwerder: Minister Peter Klassen

From the congregation in Danzig, urban area: Bishop Jacob de Veer
Minister Peter Thiessen
Deacon Cornelius Focking
Danzig, rural area: Minister Hans Toews

From the congregation in Danzig Neugarten: Bishop Jacob Kliewer
Minister Ertmann Stobbe
Deacon Gerhard Klassen
Deacon Heinrich von Steen

From the congregation in Elbing: Deacon Abraham Sudermann
Deacon Peter Neufeld

From the congregation in Ellerwald: Bishop Peter Dick
Minister Harm Regier

From the congregation in Stuhm [Tragheimerweide]: Minister Gillis Adrian
Deacon Peter Frantz

From the congregation in Graudenz [Montau]: Minister Isaac Adrian
Deacon Isaac Schroeder

From the congregation in Culm [Schoensee Frisian]: Deacon Abraham Nickel

From the congregation in Groningen [Schoensee Old Flemish]: Minister Tobias Jantz

From the congregation in Przechowka: [Bishop] Benjamin Wedel

From the congregation in Heubuden: Bishop Peter Braun
Minister Isbrand Wiebe

From the congregation in Markushof: Bishop Johann Sperling
Deacon Johann Grunau

From the congregation in Thiensdorf: Bishop Hans Siebert
Deacon Hans Froese

9 Bishops
18 Ministers
15 Deacons
Total 43

[June 3, 1798] – We enjoyed much friendly fellowship with the Mennonites in Koenigsberg and I, at their request, preached there on Trinity Sunday. My opening remarks were based on James 4: 17 and my sermon on Ezekiel 33: 10-11 about the benevolent guidance of God for the sinner. I compiled a lengthy story of the homage celebration which can be found among the church papers. On June 7th at 4 o'clock in the evening we departed from Koenigsberg and arrived home safely on the 9th at 7 o'clock in the evening. May the Lord receive our gratitude for his grace and blessing on the providential completion of these commitments.

July 19, 1798 – On July 19th I received a letter from J[acob] Bergthold telling me that he had arrived home safely on June 15th. I replied to him on July 26th and also wrote to the congregation in Kronsweide in Russia, admonishing them to bring an end to their unrest and establish peace amongst themselves.

[August 26, 1798] – On the 12th Sunday after Trinity Sunday I preached in the Flemish church in Rosenort on the scripture passage from Galatians 5: 13 about the fitting use and the abuse of our precious freedom.

February 15, 1799 – This year it was widely decided that it would be good to write to the King and request mitigation regarding the Edict against the Mennonites. As a result, it was agreed upon at a meeting that *Ohm* C[ornelius] Warkentin, Peter Siemens from Koczelitzke, and I should prepare a presentation on February 15th and also send it off immediately. When *Ohm* Warkentin and I arrived there, we discovered a note from Peter Siemens informing us that he had already sent off a presentation on his own accord. As grievous as this outrage was, very little could be done to stop it. On March 13th the reply came, which newly stated: “that as long as we did not want to submit ourselves to military service, we must also remain subject to the restriction”. Since then, I have not accepted any further responsibilities for congregational matters, because I did not want to have anything to do with such heinous people, as was Siemens, who wants to be called a minister. The Flemish *Ohms* did not consider the matter at all and remained silent throughout.

[June 2, 1799] – On the 2nd Sunday after Trinity Sunday I served the youth from the congregation in Markushof, 11 persons in all, with baptism.

[June 9, 1799] – On the 3rd Sunday after Trinity Sunday I celebrated communion there [Markushof] because their Bishop Johann Sperling had suffered a small stroke. I also conducted an election for ministers. Elected were Hans Peters from Markushof and Abraham Froese from Grunau, but neither of them preached.

July 8, 1799 – On July 8th Jacob Bergthold with his family arrived from Galicia in 2 wagons. His father accompanied him, as well as his brother-in-law Ewy, together with his wife. They moved into *Ohm* Jan Quiring’s new house near the lake.

[July 21, 1799] – On the 9th Sunday after Trinity Sunday, he preached his first sermon.

[September 29, 1799] – On the 19th Sunday after Trinity Sunday I celebrated communion in Markushof and *Ohm* Dirk Allert was elected as Bishop, because *Ohm* Sperling’s condition was not improving. He himself requested that someone else be chosen.

[October 13, 1799] – On the 21st Sunday after Trinity Sunday I installed *Ohm* Dirk Allert as Bishop.

November 7, 1799 – On November 7th our Deacon Heinrich Mekelburger died at the age of 79 years. He has been in the ministry since 1771.

1800 – This year we received an order from the King to report the number of births, deaths and marriages to the Lutheran minister, for the purpose of payment of the surplice fees. This was done promptly with Minister Trigloff in Ladekopp through the judicial office. We were to pay the surplice fees and forward the annual delivery of the harvest [*Kalende*] to the parish from 1789 on, when the Mennonite Edict had been issued.

I worked to free the children of mixed marriages from the military responsibilities to the canton and had been in Mokerau near Graudenz about that around Pentecost. I have spoken with the Cabinet Counselor Beime and also given him a presentation addressed to the King. In response I received a statement that the 9 children were absolved of the military responsibilities to the canton. The names of these nine, as well as the names of the parents were to be sent to the West Prussian chamber.

October 21, 1800 – On October 21st I received a visit from the dear *Ohm* Peter Janz, Bishop of the Neumark congregation [in Brandenburg], *Ohm* Benjamin Wedel, Bishop in Przechowka, Jacob Franz, Bishop in Culm with Deacon Joh[ann] Goerz, and Gilles Adrian, Bishop in the Stuhm congregation. They departed on the 22nd. May the Lord go with them.

This fall a young Mennonite man from Culm had slept with a Catholic maiden and afterwards took her into the garden and cut her throat under the guise that she herself had done it. However, the truth came out and he was arrested and jailed in Culm. This happened now while the *Ohms* I mentioned were visiting me.

He confessed that he persuaded the maiden (who was simple minded and wanted 100 *Reichsthaler* from him because he wanted to marry a Mennonite), that he had the means to remove the fetus, but it would be so difficult that he had to bind her hands and blindfold her or she would want to fight back in fear. In that manner he had committed the murder at night. He will probably be sentenced to the breaking or execution wheel because he murdered the mother with the fetus. This took place the following year, 1801, and he was placed on the wheel alive.

N.B. The request for the delivery of the surplice fees and harvest goods to the Lutheran Minister Trigloff in Ladekopp was only fulfilled at the end of this year.

February 1801 – Since the payment request of the Lutheran Minister was delayed by 8 weeks, it was decided, with the approval of the other lowland villages, to travel to Berlin in order to talk with the Cabinet Counselor about this matter and pass on a presentation to the King. I had spoken to the Cabinet Counselor last year in Mokerau [East Prussia] and so they all pressured

me to make the journey. I then made up my mind to go and chose as my travelling companion Jacob Classen from Schoenebergerfaehr. We left from there on February 6th and arrived in Berlin on the 19th. Our lodging was in the White Swan on the *Judenstrasse* with the Honourable Private Secretary Krause.

March 2, 1801 – On March 2nd we went to see the Honourable Private Cabinet Counselor Beime, passed on our presentation and asked for his assistance. He was very unassuming, recognized me immediately, and said, “We have spoken before, but I can’t remember where!” Then I responded, “In Mokerau!” He replied, “You are right!”

Afterwards I spoke with him on two different occasions and also gave him a copy of our Confession of Faith, also the instructional booklet for baptismal candidates and a booklet of sermons for communion. He cheerfully accepted them and expressed his sincere thanks. He said, “I really appreciate that” and then shook my hand.

June 1, 1801 - Since the West Prussian government had not sent the King the required report, we handed over our matter to our host, *Herr* Krause and departed Berlin on June 1st. I arrived home safe and sound on June 11th after I had been gone from home for 18 weeks. We had 4 horses and a coach from the waggoner Mantleiter from Danzig.

October 3, 1801 – A cabinet directive followed from our petition, dated October 3rd in Potsdam, that we were exempt from the payments to the Lutheran ministers. This cabinet order applied to all Mennonites in West Prussia and was communicated to all administrations. The unsuspecting Peter Siemens from Koczelitzke was in an uproar against my accomplishment. All the Flemish congregations followed his example and thus we only divided the costs of the trip among those in the Ladekopp parish. In 1802 when the declaration against us came down, whereby we would not only have our trade and business restricted, but also be deprived of our religious freedom, this man Siemens lashed out that I was at fault, etc.

March 9, 1802 – At the urging of the people from Koenigsberg a meeting of all the congregations was held on March 9th in Heubuden and on the advice of Count von Dohnau and Count von Dunhoff the justice advisor *Herr* Stegman was chosen to provide counsel for us. It was then arranged that I, together with *Ohm* Corn[elius] Warkentin, Wilhelm Martens from Thiensdorf and Wilhelm Huebert from Koczelitske should meet on March 23rd at the home of *Ohm* Johann Wieler, Bishop in Koenigsberg. In the company of *Ohm* Wieler, *Herr* Reinike Kaufmann from Koenigsberg and 2 Lithuanian *Ohms*, we then went to see *Herr* Stegman, finalized everything with him and returned home again on March 27th.

March 30, 1802 – On March 30th a presentation was sent by mail to the King, which resulted in a negative answer. Everything that happened thereafter in this pitiable situation I have recorded in a separate book.

It is a sordid situation when all the bishops are united in their work for general freedoms mainly, but devote time to religious freedom only in passing. They do not want to agree that we should make it clear to the king that because of the articles of faith regarding the swearing of an oath and seeking revenge, we cannot take up the sword. They just want to say that the war issue is against an important article of our faith. I have heard challenging thoughts about that from a number of bishops. One says, "We should first be asked for an explanation of the two articles of faith, as if the declaration wasn't already a request?" Another said, "It would have the appearance of wanting to teach the King something." A third person said, "To explain the article about seeking revenge on the basis of our confession would be offensive to the King." A fourth person suggested, "We would experience much opposition from it." A fifth person said, "If only the situation could stay that way long term."

This is how one feels shame for the Gospel of Jesus. I now endure with life the same situation as that which I experienced in the conflict regarding baptism. May God have mercy.

October 20, 1802 – On October 20th an ordinance, dated Marienwerder, the 29th of June, 1802, was sent out to all Mennonites in the Marienburg and Tiegenhof districts, saying the directive from the cabinet from October 3rd last year, generally speaking, applied to all Mennonites and that all of them must be exempt from the harvest delivery, the obligation for *Wittel Tag* [at Easter], the *Jura Stola* [church dues], and all personal taxes to the Protestant clergy and churches.

On the other hand, what remained firm was that the Mennonites were subject to notifying the Evangelical clergy at their place of residence, of the total number of births, marriages and deaths that had occurred. These were to be recorded in the church register and for that they had to pay a copying fee to the clergy. The payment was 7 *Groschen* 9 *Pfennig* for each birth and death, and 60 *Groschen* for each marriage. See page 116 in the diary [1800].

Because a midwifery institute was being built in Danzig, we had to pay an additional fee of 7 *Groschen* 9 *Pfennig* for each birth and marriage, which the Lutheran minister was to give to the institute. The mayors however, were obligated to report the number of births and marriages to the administration quarterly, so that could be checked against the list submitted by the ministers.

I wrote Bishop Wieler in Koenigsberg about my opinion on the present petition and since I did not get a response, I wrote to *Herr* Stegman himself and freely expressed my thoughts. That only happened in February of 1803. It is regrettable that nothing has been done regarding this matter for about a year.

1803 – Finally the congregations did regain their sanity and settled the payment of the costs for the Berlin trip: in the Ladekopp congregation the charge was 12 *Florin* 6 *Groschen* per *Hube*, and in the Heubuden, Tiegenhagen, Burwalde and Ladekopp Werder congregations the charge

was 6 *Florin 3 Groschen per Hube*. In addition, further charges arose; in order to solicit for patrons of the court an enlistment of donors was requested. However, it was never used because thereafter the payment of the *Cadetten* money was required.

Donner Diary Glossary

Attest – an official verification of a member’s good standing within a congregation. Issued by the Aeltester/Bishop of the congregation to members seeking to transfer to another congregation.

Aussentrau – an outside marriage or mixed marriage with an Evangelical or Lutheran person

Cadetten Geld (Protection Money) – money tax paid to the government in lieu of military service. This amounted to 5,000 Reichthaler per year to support the military (Cadet) academy at Culm. Donner explains how the payment was distributed among the Mennonite population of West and East Prussia.

Culm (Culmshe) – this usually refers to the Frisian Mennonite congregation at Schoensee, near the city of Culm. On occasion it may refer to the nearby Groniger Old Flemish congregation, which also had a meeting house in Schoensee. In those cases, we have tried to make the distinction in the translation.

Ducat (pl. Ducaten) – A unit of currency. Value at the time of this diary is unknown.

Exercitium Religionis – the exercise of one’s religion

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – a liturgical feast celebrated on September 14th to honour the cross as the sign of salvation

Flemish – a branch of the Mennonite church in Prussia. Not related to origin in the Netherlands.

Florin - Unit of currency. See Reichsthaler.

Frisian – a branch of the Mennonite church in Prussia. Not related to origin in the Netherlands.

Graudenz – Usually refers to the Frisian Mennonite congregation of Montau, near Graudenz.

Groschen – Unit of currency. See Reichsthaler.

Hufe/Hube (pl. Hufen) – A unit of land measurement. Equal to 16.8 hectares or 41.5 acres.

Jura Stola (Surplice Fees) – The dues which were paid to the parish for baptisms, marriages, interments, confirmation, confession, and similar religious services performed by the priest. Mennonites were required to pay these for births, marriages and deaths/interments to the local Catholic church during the Polish period and had to fight to be relieved of these fees, even after the region was taken over by the Prussian government.

Kalende – annual delivery of a portion of the harvest to the parish.

Kleinwerder – this is the term used by Donner for the Frisian Mennonite congregation of Thiensdorf in the Klein Werder region of West Prussia. This congregation split in 1790, with about a quarter of the members forming the Marcushof congregation. The issue was the Aussentrau (see above).

Koste – the place where you are.

Morgen – A unit of land measurement. Equal to 0.56 hectares or 1.38 acres. There were 30 Morgen in a Hufe. There were 300 Ruten in a Morgen.

Nessau – the term used in Donner’s diary is Neschefsky. This refers to the Obernessau Frisian Mennonite congregation near the city of Thorn (now Torun).

Ohm – Derived from the Dutch word for uncle. A term of respect usually reserved for the members of the Mennonite *Lehrdienst* (ministry or clergy).

Privilegium - the Mennonites were given Privilegia by the Polish kings, which guaranteed certain rights and protection from abuse by the local authorities. The Privilegium was usually reaffirmed by each new King.

Reichsthaler – Unit of currency. Equal to 90 Prussian Groschen. During the time period of this diary the Rth. was worth 3 Florins or 3 Polish Gulden.

Rute (pl. Ruten) – Refers to the square rute. A unit of land measurement related to the old English rod. Equal to 18.6 square meters or 200 square feet.

St. Michael’s Day (Michaelmas) - Celebrated on September 29th, one of the four “quarter” days in the year. They were the four dates on which servants were hired, rents were due, leases begun, land was exchanged, and debts were paid.

Schwetz – occasionally used to refer to the Groniger Old Flemish congregation at Przechowko, near the town of Schwetz.

Stauf – in Low-German Stof. A unit of volume usually used for beverages. The amount varies from one region to the other and also has changed with time.

Stuhm (Stuhmsche) – this refers to the Frisian Mennonite congregation more commonly known as Tragheimerweide, which was near the Prussian town of Stuhm.

Wittel Tag – Annually at Easter each homestead gave the minister/priest 12 eggs and the sexton or church officer in charge of sacred objects, 10 eggs. The homeowner was free to give more. The cottage owners gave the minister and sexton 6-8 eggs each.

Evangelical Church Year

Donner made several references to the various events of the Evangelical Lutheran church year. These are outlined below.

The church year begins on the 1st Advent of one year and ends on Eternity Sunday the next year. The Christian holy days are made up of moveable* (observed on different dates in different years) and fixed** (observed on the same date/week every year) feast and fast days.

*Advent** – the 4 Sundays before Christmas

*Christmas Eve***, Christmas Day**, 2nd day of Christmas**

*Epiphany*** - January 6

*Fastnacht Day** - means “the night before the fast”; refers to the Christian tradition of eating rich foods before the Lenten fast began; also called Shrove Tuesday or Fat Tuesday

*Lent** - 6 Sundays before Easter

Invocavit: first Sunday of Lent

Reminiscere: second Sunday of Lent – “Remember, O Lord” Psalm 25:5-6

Palm Sunday: sixth Sunday of Lent

*Good Friday**

*Easter Sunday**

*Jubilate Sunday** - an invitation to universal joy in the risen Christ on the 3rd Sunday after Easter

*Cantate Sunday** - 4th Sunday after Easter: the introit for that day is taken from the Cantate (Psalm 98)

*Rogate Sunday** - a day of penitence and prayer on the 5th Sunday after Easter

*Ascension** - 40 days after Easter

*Pentecost** - 50 days after Easter

Mid-Pentecost – the 4th Wednesday after Easter, the mid-way point feast day between Easter and Pentecost

*Saint John's Day*** - feast day for the birth of John the Baptist celebrated on June 24

*Trinity Sunday** - first Sunday after Pentecost celebrating the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit the Sundays after Trinity Sunday are numbered: such as “the 7th Sunday after Trinity Sunday” up until Eternity Sunday and the end of the church year.

*Saint Bartholomew Feast Day*** - Saint Bartholomew (also called Nathaniel) was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus; his feast day is celebrated on August 24 Eternity Sunday*