

MAKEMIE SOCIETY RECEIVES PUBLIC CHARITY STATUS

The former Chairman of the Francis Makemie Society, Richard F. Hall, III, and current Chairman, The Reverend Doctor Donald M. Rising, announced receipt of an Internal Revenue Service decision of February 9, 2011, granting the Society tax-exempt status as a public charity. The status exempts the Society from the payment of Federal income taxes and allows the public to give the Society tax-deductible gifts, bequests and devises. The effort to obtain the status was the culmination of work over a number of years by Society members, particularly Warner F. Young, Jr., Mark S. Fisher, Maury Enright, Mary M. Gladding, and the former Chairman, Richard F. Hall, III, and Society friends, Warner F. Young, III, Esquire, and Delegate Lynwood W. Lewis, Jr. with counsel from Society member, Fitzhugh Lee Godwin, Jr., Esquire, and Washington, D. C. attorney, Ronald Highsmith, Jr.

A Society goal is to give recognition to the life and work of 17th Century minister, Francis Makemie. Makemie organized and served as the moderator of the first American Presbytery, which met in Philadelphia in 1706, and was the first inter-colony religious body free of European control. Francis Makemie is recognized as the Father of organized Presbyterianism in America, which was an early influence upon a free and united nation.

Another Society goal is to locate the exact grave of Francis Makemie. On October 21, 2010, the Society arranged remote sensing equipment, the latest technology in locating “cultural anomalies” such as bone fragments, bricks, walls and even fence postholes of different soil texture, to analyze the land around the Makemie Monument in Sanford, Virginia. David Hazzard, an archeologist with the Commonwealth of Virginia, analyzed the results. Three graves were located but more land is to be cleared of brush to extend the remote sensing search to a larger area where the Founder's remains are believed interred. The Society is interested in locating the exact graves of Francis Makemie, his wife, Naomi Makemie, and her Father, Colonel William Anderson, and his wife, and the graves of the two Makemie children in order to erect appropriate markers upon the graves.

Membership in the Francis Makemie Society is open to the public. Tax-deductible contributions to the Society and toward the remote sensing project can be made to the Francis Makemie Society, C/O Mary T. Gladding, Treasurer, 25317 Jolly's Neck Road, Withams, Virginia 23488. (Prepared by Fitz Godwin and announced at the 8 Mar 2011 Board of Directors Meeting)