

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

History 141 Post Reformation Christianity

We last left off in 1580 with the Book of Concord, which was published for the first time in Dresden. This book is the confessional standard for all orthodox Lutheran church bodies. LCMS pastors publicly commit to teach in accord with its confessions at their ordinations and installations. All LCMS congregations also have an unalterable article in their constitution that commits them to teach in accord with the Book of Concord's confessions.

That being said, a lot has happened in church history over the past 438 years. Here is a smattering of significant events as I see them from the 16th century (1500s) to the present.

In 1525, the Anabaptist (re-baptism) movement began. They were considered part of the radical reformation, rejecting baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ in the Lord's supper. Ulrich Zwingli is often misidentified with this group because he did not believe in the real presence, however, he did believe in baptismal regeneration and infant baptism.

In 1529, King Henry the 8th of England began a break from the Roman Catholic Church, and after a number of parliamentary acts (the final being 1534), the Church of England (COE) was established with the King being given the title "Supreme Head of the Church of England". Initially, the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church were doctrinally very similar. Over time, however, some protestant reforms became part of COE doctrine, developing over time into what we know today in America as the Episcopal or Anglican churches. A number of church bodies can trace their roots to the COE: Puritan, some Baptist, Methodist, Quaker, Unitarian, Universalist.

In the late 1530s, John Calvin began his reform efforts, publishing his institutes in 1536. Having been born in France, he spent much of his adult life in Strasburg and Geneva. Reformed, Presbyterian, Unitarian /Universalist, Pentecostal, and many other church bodies can trace their roots to John Calvin.

In the 1600s, the many Baptist, Puritan, and Presbyterian churches became what is known as congregationalist. The polity of the LCMS is heavily influenced by congregational practices.

In the early 1800s, the Adventist and Holiness movements splintered from Methodism, and later in the early 1900s, the Pentecostal movement splintered from the holiness movement.

In 1854, Rome established the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and in 1870, the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. However, Papal Infallibility is only said to apply when the Pope makes a doctrinal proclamation **Ex cathedra** (Latin for "from the chair"), meaning the seat or throne of authority.

While Eastern Orthodoxy has about 14 self-governing bodies that are all doctrinally very similar, the western Christian church is split into many. About half of the world's Christians claim to be Roman Catholic, but the rest of Christianity is in as many as 25,000 denominations.

That will wrap up our discussion of history. The next topic I had planned on addressing was the social sciences, then theology, but this discussion of so many Christian church bodies makes me think that you may wonder more about them and their differences, so I think we will begin to address that question next month and see where it takes us.

In Christ,
Pastor Portier