

# Specific Issues: Lutherans, Reformed Churches, Methodists, and others

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## *Ecumenism & Interreligious Dialogue*

### **Lutheran World Federation**

- Origin
  - 1947: formed
- Doctrine
  - Texts
    - Apostles' Creed
    - Nicene Creed
    - Athanasian Creed
    - Unaltered Augsburg Confession
    - *The Book of Concord*
    - *The Smalcald Articles*
    - *The Treatise*
    - Martin Luther's *Large and Small Catechisms*
    - *Formula of Concord*
  - Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist
  - Eucharist gives real participation in Christ
  - Ordained ministry, with bishops elected for certain terms
- History
  - Visit of a delegation of the Lutheran World Federation to the Vatican in 1964
  - Official Joint Lutheran-Roman Catholic Study Commission beginning dialogue in 1967
  - Malta Report on the Gospel and the Church in 1972
  - In 1987, the Lutheran Church in America, the American Lutheran Church, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, merged to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
  - Commission on Christian Unity (1996)
- Points in common
  - Similar commitment to doctrinal clarity
  - Common methods of historical and biblical scholarship
- Progress and problems
  - Lutheran-Roman Catholic Commission on Unity
    - *Facing Unity* (1985)
    - *The Church and Justification* (1993)
    - *The Apostolicity of the Church* (2006)
  - Official Common Statement
    - *The Joint Declaration on Justification* (1997)
- Other dialogues
  - "In the face of agreement in the faith, 'no church should condemn another because the one has fewer or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other has.'" (*Formula of Concord*, Epitome 10.7, cited in *Confessing Our Faith Together*, 2)
- United Methodist Church – Lutheran World Federation
  - *The Church: Community of Grace* (Geneva, 1984)
  - Church of Norway and United Methodist Church in Norway
    - *Fellowship of Grace: Report from the Conversations between Church of Norway and the United Methodist Church in Norway* (Oslo, 1994)
  - United Methodist – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
    - *Confessing Our Faith Together: A Proposal for Full Communion between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The United Methodist Church* (April 2008)
      - "No particular structure of oversight is of the essence of the Church", quoting the 1987 statement *Episcopacy: A Lutheran-Methodist Common Statement to the Church*
      - Calls for a mutual recognition of each other's sacraments and ordination, with the full interchangeability of ordained ministers
  - Joint working group towards cooperation with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (1999)

### **Methodists**

- John (1703-91) and Charles (1707-88) Wesley founded the movement in the years following 1738
- Originally a movement within Anglicanism

## History

- The United Methodist Church (*see www.umc.org*)
  - 1784: The Methodist Episcopal Church in America
  - 1800: The United Brethren in Christ
  - 1803: The Evangelical Association
  - 1830: The Methodist Protestant Church formed from members of The Methodist Episcopal Church
  - 1845: The Methodist Episcopal Church, South formed from southern members of The Methodist Episcopal Church in America
  - 1922: The Evangelical Church formed from a reconstituted Evangelical Association, healing a 28-year schism
  - 1939: The Methodist Protestant Church united with The Methodist Episcopal Church and The Methodist Episcopal Church, South to form The Methodist Church
  - 1946: The United Brethren in Christ and The Evangelical Church join to form The Evangelical United Brethren Church
  - 1968: The Evangelical United Brethren Church united with The Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church
  - Doctrine
    - Texts
      - Preaching of John Wesley in his *Forty-four Sermons* (1793)
      - *The Twenty-Five Articles of Religion (of the Methodist Church)*
      - *The Confession of Faith (of the Evangelical United Brethren Church)*
      - *The General Rules of the Methodist Church*
      - *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*
      - *By Water and the Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism*, 1996
      - *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion*, 2004
    - Elders (service, Word, sacrament, order) and Deacons (Word and service)
    - Bishops consecrated for life
- The Methodist Church of Great Britain (*see www.methodist.org.uk*)
  - 1784: Conference of Methodists organized by John Wesley
  - 1795: Break with the Church of England
  - Doctrine
    - Connexional structure: the whole church acts and decides together
    - Local church—circuit—district—Connexion
    - Ordained ministries: Presbyters and deacons
    - Quadrilateral: scripture, reason, tradition, experience
- The African Methodist Episcopal Church (*see www.ame-church.com*)
  - 1787: Free African Society founded by Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, and others
  - 1794: Bethel AME formed
  - 1818: The African Methodist Episcopal Church formed by Richard Allen in Philadelphia
  - Doctrine
    - Apostles' Creed
    - *The Twenty-Five Articles of Religion (of the Methodist Church)*
    - Bishops—Presiding Elders—Pastors
- The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (*see www.amez.org*)
  - 1820: Formed, with roots back to 1796; "Zion" added to its title in 1848 to distinguish the New York-based group from the Philadelphia-based one
  - General Conference—Board of bishops—General officers
  - Doctrine
    - Salvation of the whole person: mind, body, spirit: racial justice, peace, and harmony (Freedom Church)
- The Christian Methodist Episcopal Church (*see www.c-m-e.org*)
  - 1870: The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church formed from African American members of The Methodist Episcopal Church, South
  - Doctrine
    - Perfect, sinless life is attainable
    - Christ died for all
    - Justification by faith
    - Witness of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life
    - Christians can fall from grace
    - Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
    - General Conference—General Connectional Board—Episcopacy—Judicial Council
    - Bishops, elected by the General Conference
- Church of the Nazarene (*see www.nazarene.org*)
  - 1830s: Holiness movement began
  - 1908: Church of the Nazarene formed from various holiness churches including the Pentecostal Churches of America, the previous Church of the Nazarene, Holiness Association of Texas, Holiness Christian Church, Holiness Church of Christ, Pentecostal Church of Scotland, Pentecostal Mission, Wesleyan Church
  - Doctrine

- Protestant Christian Church in the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition
  - Great Commission church and a holiness church
  - God offers all forgiveness, peace, joy, love, meaning in life, and the promise of heaven through a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
  - Scriptures contain all that is necessary
  - The impenitent are eternally lost
  - Christ died for all humans and all who believe in him are justified and regenerated
  - Faith in Christ wholly sanctifies
  - Emphasis on Divine Healing
- The Uniting Church in Australia (*see www.uca.org.au*)
  - 1977: Formed from a union of the Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia, and the Presbyterian Church of Australia
  - Doctrine
    - Texts
      - Apostles' Creed, Nicene Creed
      - Scots Confession of Faith (1560)
      - Heidelberg Catechism (1563)
      - Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)
      - Savoy Declaration (1658)
      - Preaching of John Wesley in his *Forty-four Sermons* (1793)
    - Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper
    - Ordained ministries: ministers of the Word and deacons
    - Commissioned lay people: elders, lay preachers, youth workers, community ministers
- The United Church of Canada (*see www.united-church.ca*)
  - 1925: Formation from the union of the Methodist Church, Canada, the Congregational Union of Canada, and 70% of the Presbyterian Church in Canada
  - 1930: The Wesleyan Methodist Church of Bermuda united
  - 1968: The Canada Conference of The Evangelical United Brethren Church united
  - Doctrine
    - Centrality of the Scriptures
    - Sacraments of Baptism and Communion
    - Commitment to inclusiveness

## World Methodist Council

- Formed in 1951 as a successor to the Ecumenical Methodist Conferences formed in 1881
- Doctrine (*see www.worldmethodistcouncil.org*)
  - Evangelical, catholic, and reformed
  - Scriptures are the primary rule of faith
  - Apostles' Creed and Nicene Creed
  - Scripture is interpreted through reason, tradition, and experience
  - Centrality of grace (prevenient, justifying, sanctifying)
  - Christ died for all
  - Sacraments: Baptism & Lord's Supper
  - Equal value to doctrine and religious experience
  - Compatibility of forms of spirituality
  - Eucharist gives real participation in Christ

## Dialogue

- Official Dialogue with the World Methodist Council
  - Methodist text of Association with the *Joint Declaration on Justification*, 2006
  - Celebration of the 300th anniversary of the birth of John Wesley
- International Methodist-Catholic Dialogue Commission
  - *The Grace Given You in Christ: Catholics and Methodists Reflect Further on the Church*, 2006
  - *Speaking the Truth in Love: Teaching Authority among Catholics and Methodists*, 2001
  - *The Word of Life: A Statement on Revelation and Faith*, 1996
  - *The Apostolic Tradition*, 1991
  - *Towards a Statement on the Church*, 1986
  - *Toward an Agreed Statement on the Holy Spirit*, 1981
  - Dublin Report, 1976
  - Denver Report, 1971

## World Alliance of Reformed Churches

- *See www.warc.ch*
- 1875: Alliance of the Reformed Churches formed
- 1891: International Congregational Council held
- 1970: The Congregational and Presbyterian alliances united to form the World Alliance of Reformed Churches
- Plans to unite with the Reformed Ecumenical Council (<http://rec.gospelcom.net>) in 2010 to form the World Communion of Reformed Churches

- Official Dialogue
  - *The Church as Community of Common Witness to the Kingdom of God* (2005)
  - *Towards a Common Understanding of the Church* (1990)
  - *The Presence of Christ in Church and World* (1977)

### **Baptist World Alliance**

- “Summons to Witness to Christ in Today’s World – A Report on the Baptist–Roman Catholic International Conversations” [1984-1988]

### **Christian Church – Disciples of Christ**

- “The Church as Communion in Christ” [1983-1992]

### **Pentecostal Churches**

- *On Becoming a Christian: Insights from Scripture and Patristic Writings with Some Contemporary Reflections* (1998-2006), Report of the Fifth Phase of the International Dialogue between Some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders and the Catholic Church
- “Perspectives on Koinonia: The Reports from the Third Quinquennium of Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders” [1985-1989]
- “Proselytism, Evangelization, and Common Witness, The Report from the Fourth Phase of International Dialogue [1990-1997] between the Roman Catholic Church and some Classical Pentecostal Churches and Leaders”

### **Evangelicals**

- Evangelical/Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission (1977-84)

### **Mennonite World Conference**

- *Called Together to be Peacemakers*, Report of the International Dialogue between the Catholic Church and Mennonite World Conference (1998-2003)

### **Other dialogues: Multilateral and non-Roman Catholic**

- World Council of Churches
  - Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to members of the Joint Working Group between the World Council of Churches and the Catholic Church (2008)
  - Vision of the Church as a “Conciliar Fellowship”
  - *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* (Lima, 1982-87)
- Anglican-Lutheran
  - Porvoo Declaration (1996)
  - Agreement of full communion between the Anglican Churches of the British Isles and the Lutheran Churches of Scandinavia and the Baltics