Protestant Denominations

The major Protestant traditions in the order they began, each described in its own terms. Figures are rounded estimates.

TRADITION	FOUNDED BY	WHEN	WHERE	BAPTISM	LORD'S SUPPER	CHURCH GOVERNMENT	MAIN EMPHASIS
1 **Lutheran** About 75 million worldwide	Martin Luther (1483–1546), a German monk and Bible professor.	1517: the Ninety-five Theses (October 31). Augsburg Confession, 1530.	Wittenberg, Saxony (Germany). Spread to Scandinavia and the Baltic lands.	Infants and adults, by pouring or immersion. Baptism is a means of God's grace.	Christ's true body and blood are present "in, with and under" the bread and wine.	Synods and councils; bishops in many countries.	Justification by faith alone; the difference between Law and Gospel.
2 **Reformed** About 75 million worldwide	Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich, John Calvin (1509–1564) in Geneva, and John Knox in Scotland.	Zwingli began preaching in Zurich in 1519; Calvin's Institutes, 1536; Scotland, 1560.	Zurich and Geneva, Switzerland; then France, the Netherlands, Hungary, Scotland and America.	Infants of believers and adult converts, as the sign of God's covenant; usually by sprinkling or pouring.	Christ is spiritually present and received by faith.	Presbyterian: elders in a session, presbytery and general assembly.	The sovereignty of God, His covenant, and salvation by His grace from first to last.
3 **Anabaptist** About 2.5 million worldwide	Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz and George Blaurock; later Menno Simons, Jakob Hutter and Jakob Ammann.	January 21, 1525 (first believer's baptisms). Amish split, 1693.	Zurich, Switzerland; then the Netherlands, Moravia and, from 1683, Pennsylvania.	Believers only, on confession of faith; usually by pouring.	A memorial of Christ's death; many also practice foot washing.	Congregational, with bishops, ministers and deacons.	Following Jesus in daily life, nonviolence, and a church separate from the state.
4 **Anglican** About 85 million worldwide	King Henry VIII and Archbishop Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556); settled under Queen Elizabeth I.	1534: Act of Supremacy. Book of Common Prayer, 1549; Thirty-nine Articles, 1563.	England (Canterbury and London); spread through the British Empire.	Infants and adults, by pouring or immersion.	Christ is truly present, received spiritually by faith ("Holy Communion").	Episcopal: bishops, priests and deacons. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the honored leader.	Reformed doctrine in a historic, liturgical form of worship.
5 **Congregational** A few million worldwide	English Puritans and Separatists: Robert Browne, the Pilgrims (William Bradford) and the Puritans (John Winthrop).	Browne's church, 1581; Pilgrims at Plymouth, 1620; Massachusetts Bay, 1630.	Norwich, England; then Plymouth and Boston, New England.	Infants of believers and adult converts.	Christ spiritually present, received by faith.	Congregational: each local church governs itself under Christ.	Each church a covenanted body of believers, free to govern itself by Scripture.
6 **Baptist** About 50 million members in Baptist World Alliance churches; many more Baptists worldwide	John Smyth and Thomas Helwys, English Separatists; in America, Roger Williams.	1609 (Amsterdam); first Baptist church in England, 1612; in America, 1638.	Amsterdam; London; Providence, Rhode Island.	Believers only, by immersion, as a public testimony of faith.	An ordinance in memory of Christ's death.	Congregational: each church is self-governing; pastors and deacons.	A converted church membership, soul liberty and the authority of the Bible.
7 **Quaker** About 400,000 worldwide, the largest number in Kenya	George Fox (1624–1691), an English preacher; later William Penn and Robert Barclay.	1652, when Fox preached to large crowds in the north of England.	Pendle Hill and Firbank Fell, northwest England; then Pennsylvania (1682).	No outward baptism; Friends seek the inward baptism of the Spirit.	No outward Communion; Friends seek inward communion with Christ.	Monthly and yearly meetings; decisions by seeking unity, with no vote.	The inward light of Christ, silent waiting on God, peace and simplicity.

Scripture quoted from the King James Version

Protestant Denominations (continued)

The major Protestant traditions in the order they began, each described in its own terms. Figures are rounded estimates.

TRADITION	FOUNDED BY	WHEN	WHERE	BAPTISM	LORD'S SUPPER	CHURCH GOVERNMENT	MAIN EMPHASIS
Methodist About 80 million worldwide (World Methodist Council)	John Wesley (1703–1791) and his brother Charles, Anglican priests; in America, Francis Asbury.	Holy Club at Oxford, 1729; Wesley's conversion, May 24, 1738; American church organized 1784.	Oxford and London, England; Baltimore, Maryland.	Infants and adults, by sprinkling, pouring or immersion.	Christ is spiritually present; the table is open to all who love Him.	Connectional: bishops and conferences; pastors are appointed.	God's grace for all, assurance of salvation, and holy living.
Restoration About 5 million worldwide	Barton W. Stone and Thomas and Alexander Campbell, former Presbyterians.	Cane Ridge revival, 1801; Declaration and Address, 1809; the two movements united January 1, 1832.	Cane Ridge and Lexington, Kentucky; Washington, Pennsylvania; Bethany, (West) Virginia.	Believers, by immersion, for the forgiveness of sins.	Every Lord's Day, as a memorial.	Congregational: elders and deacons in each church.	Christian unity by returning to the faith and practice of the New Testament church.
Adventist About 22 million Seventh-day Adventists worldwide	William Miller, a Baptist preacher; then Joseph Bates, James White and Ellen G. White (1827–1915).	Millerite movement, 1831–1844; Seventh-day Adventist Church organized May 1863.	Upstate New York and New England; Battle Creek, Michigan.	Believers, by immersion.	Communion, usually each quarter, with foot washing.	Representative: local conferences, unions and a General Conference.	The soon return of Christ, the seventh-day Sabbath and healthful living.
Holiness Millions worldwide; the Church of the Nazarene alone about 2.6 million	Methodist leaders such as Phoebe Palmer; later Phineas Bresee (Nazarene), William and Catherine Booth (Salvation Army).	National Camp Meeting, 1867; Salvation Army, 1865; Church of the Nazarene united 1908.	Vineland, New Jersey; London; Los Angeles; Pilot Point, Texas.	Believers and, in some churches, infants. The Salvation Army keeps no outward sacraments.	A memorial and means of grace (most churches).	Mostly connectional, with superintendents; the Salvation Army has a military-style order.	Entire sanctification: a heart cleansed and filled with God's love.
Pentecostal Pentecostals and charismatics: several hundred million, about a quarter of all Christians	Charles F. Parham (Topeka) and William J. Seymour (1870–1922), who led the Azusa Street Revival.	January 1, 1901 (Topeka); Azusa Street Revival, 1906–1909. Charismatic renewal from 1960.	Topeka, Kansas; Los Angeles, California.	Believers, by immersion.	A memorial of Christ's death.	Varies: congregational with district councils (Assemblies of God); bishops in some churches.	The baptism in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and the gifts of the Spirit today.
Nondenominational Tens of millions; the fastest-growing group of American Protestants	No single founder. Grew from the revivals of Whitefield, Finney, Moody and Billy Graham; Calvary Chapel (Chuck Smith) and others.	Independent churches from the 1800s; rapid growth since the 1960s and 1970s.	Across the United States, then worldwide.	Usually believers, by immersion.	Usually a memorial, monthly or weekly.	Independent: led by a pastor and elders or a board.	The Bible, personal conversion, the cross and sharing the gospel.

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." **Ephesians 4:4-6 (KJV)**

Scripture quoted from the King James Version

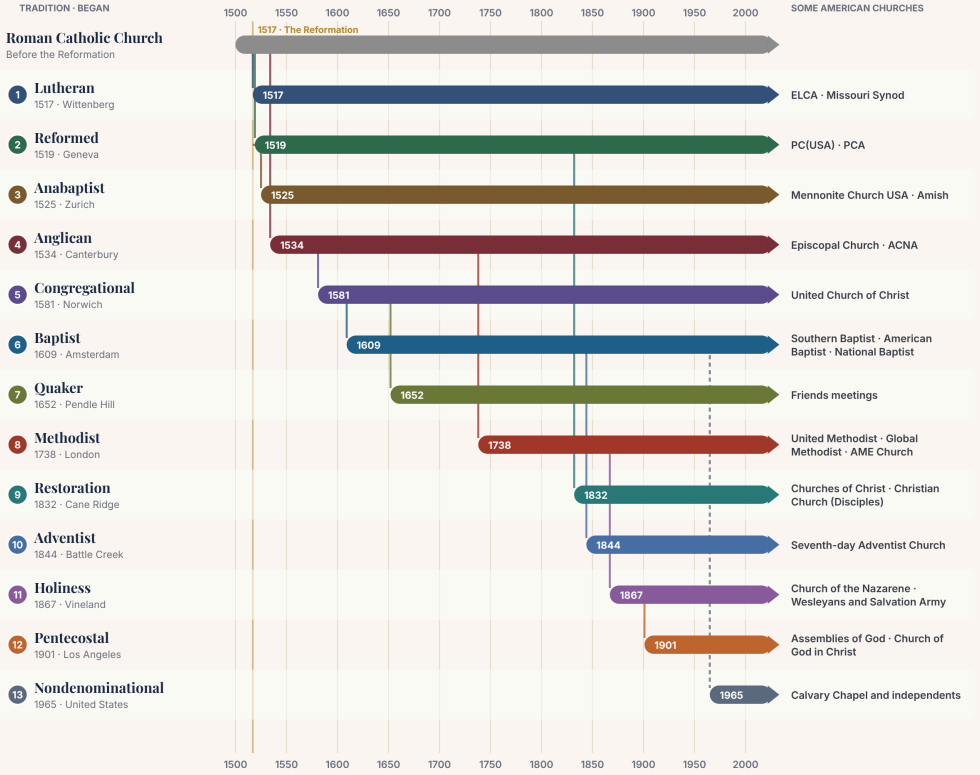
Family Tree and Where Each Tradition Began

The major Protestant traditions in the order they began, each described in its own terms. Figures are rounded estimates.

RESOURCES · PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

The Protestant Family Tree

How each tradition grew from the Reformation and from one another, 1517 to today

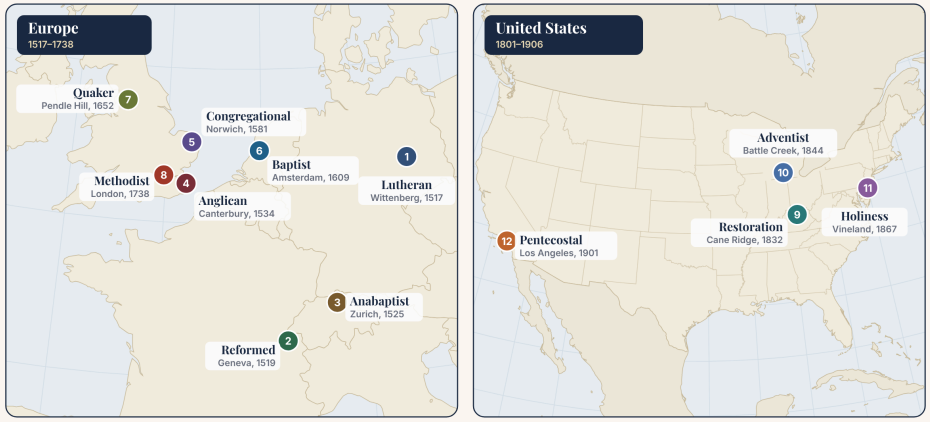


Bars begin in the year each tradition began. Lines show the tradition it grew from. Numbers match the summary table and the map.

RESOURCES · PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

Where Each Tradition Began

The Reformation in Europe, 1517–1738, and the American movements, 1801–1906



1 Lutheran · 1517 · 2 Reformed · 1519 · 3 Anabaptist · 1525 · 4 Anglican · 1534 · 5 Congregational · 1581 · 6 Baptist · 1609 · 7 Quaker · 1652 · 8 Methodist · 1738 · 9 Restoration · 1832 · 10 Adventist · 1844 · 11 Holiness · 1867 · 12 Pentecostal · 1901

Numbers match the summary table and the family tree. Nondenominational churches (13) have no single place of origin.

Scripture quoted from the King James Version