

PREFACE

Welcome to “Your Reformation Walk” a seven-lesson study on the secular and church history associated with some of the great events that led to the development and continuance of confessional Lutheranism. In this study we will not delve into the doctrine contained in the confessional writings, rather we will concentrate on the forces in history that surrounded each one of them as they evolved to the finished product. For some larger reference documents a “commented” outline of the content has been provided. Additionally, we will look at some of the principal characters involved throughout history and the positive and negative impacts of their efforts. In the final lesson we will “travel through the centuries” and bring our focus into the last 150+ years of confessional Lutheranism in the U.S. For each lesson, selected photographs, maps, etc. are included to assist in bringing the events into visual context. It is hoped that by this approach each of you will gain additional insight into the development of confessional Lutheranism and better appreciate the great treasure we have in the “unaltered” work of the Reformers. A sure treasure to be preserved and shared, for the benefit of many! Truly, it is through the inspired work of Martin Luther and his colleagues that the true Word of God was restored to the people and churches, thus exposing to public view the sinful practices and unscriptural core of the Roman Church. Many thanks must also go to second generation confessional Lutherans for their diligent efforts to preserve Luther’s work and produce the Book of Concord as a full definition of the Lutheran Faith. Praise God indeed!

In June of 1998 my wife and I had the good fortune to tour the cities and places that were key to the work of Martin Luther and other Lutheran theologians. The local and federal governments in Germany have done an excellent job of restoring and displaying these historical places and artifacts. Some of the fine old churches have been totally restored from WW II damage, while others have been cleaned up and used for museums and concert halls. A few are still in restoration or the old government has torn them down. It was a trip well worth taking and I would encourage anyone so inclined to do so. One can really get the feel for how life was in those times. Since the fall of the East German government there has been a resurgence of religion in that part of the country. Nowhere is that more true than in the Saxon areas. I have been told that in the ten years following the “fall of the wall,” 20% of the people are now attending church, with 75% of those being Lutheran and the other 25% Catholic. Good friends Dieter and Ursula Osterburg from Steinebach, Germany organized the 1998 trip, making excellent choices in all areas.

It is interesting to note that when unification took place on 3 October 1990 the German government did not extend to the churches of old East Germany the paternal administration and tax support that had been a German tradition for centuries. The government has left the churches completely free from support and administration, much like here in the U.S., and they are flourishing in that environment. This is in heavy contrast to the situation in the old West German part, where the paternal mechanisms are still in place for the Reformed, Evangelical (Lutheran) and Catholic churches. Attendance is very low, I have been told as low as 1%, but I have no verification of that number.

In addition to the quotes I have summarized extensively from “Studies in the Lutheran Confessions” and “In Martin Luther’s Footsteps” for lessons one through six, and “Zion on the Mississippi” for lesson seven, including the two black and white photographic plates. I also borrowed photographs and text from the various pamphlets available at the locations we visited.

In 2007 and 2010 we once again set off on a trip of discovery, with our daughter Peggy, to gain a better understanding of Jan Hus and the events that took place in Prague, plus more on Saxony left unvisited on our initial trip. Peggy’s husband John also accompanied us on a third trip in 2010.

The Dresden and Meissen stops in 2007 were again arranged by our good friends Dieter and Ursula Osterburg

of Steinebach, and Bernd and Anka Blanke, of Halberstadt, with Anka being Dieter's cousin. The Blankes had been our host for several days on the first trip, so it was a great pleasure to see them again. Their daughter, Anne-Christine was also able to join in this second tour, and was a welcome addition. If you visit Saxony don't leave out Prague; it is an area rich in history and attractions, only re-discovered since the end of the cold war. Oh, did I forget to mention, the Czech beer and food is very good too!

Religion survived much better in the area we know today as the Czech Republic, with Roman Catholic remaining the predominant religion at 39%. Other religions also exist and interestingly, the Hussite Church, named after Jan (John) Hus, still exists with about 4% of the population.

A secondary purpose of this booklet is to show you some of the cities, town squares, churches, etc., that are readily available to the average tourist with the idea of encouraging you to "take the trip" to better understand what it means to be identified as Lutheran.

My wife, Deanna, has been most helpful in editing and critiquing. Spellings of some names are inconsistent, depending on the sources used in this writing.

In His service,

Gene White

YOUR REFORMATION WALK

Outline

Chronology of the Reformation

Lesson 1 – *Where to start and how it came about*

1. Overview
2. The Chronology and Geography of Historical Events Prior to the Reformation
 - The Roman and Byzantine Empires
 - The Holy Roman Empire?
 - Saxony
3. Early Church History
 - The “Second Generation of Great Teachers” of the Early Church
4. The Three Creeds
5. Early Reformers
 - Other Reformations
 - Other Significant events

Lesson 2 – *How Did We Get There?*

1. What Makes Lutherans Different From Protestant Denominations?
2. What do our Confessional Statements Include?
3. Martin Luther – Pre-95 Thesis

Lesson 3 – *The great debate that never was* (Handout: copy of the 95 Theses)

1. The 95 Thesis (Oct/Nov 1517), Intent and Purpose
2. How it Happened (film snippet)
3. Martin Luther’s Activities During this Time
4. Interrogation with Cardinal Cajetan, Augsburg, Oct. 1518
5. Other Events Leading up to the Diet of Worms, April, 1521
 - Altenburg and Leipzig Disputations
6. The Diet of Worms (film snippet)
7. Incognito as Junker Jorge
8. Back to Wittenberg and Beyond
 - Luther’s Wedding
 - Family Life of Martin Luther

Lesson 4 – *The Catechisms and Music*

1. Introduction
2. The Large One, History, Intent and Purpose
 - April 23, 1529 printing versus *The Book of Concord*
3. The Small One, History, Intent and Purpose
 - May 16, 1529 printing versus *The Book of Concord*
4. Educational Versus Doctrinal
5. Formula of Concord
6. The Music Man and Related Places

Lesson 5 – *The Augsburg Confession and Apology*

1. Origin and Preparation
2. Luther's Part in the Proceedings
3. Principle Content of the Augsburg Confession
4. History and Politics of the Time
5. The Apology to the Augsburg Confession
6. Principle Content of the Apology
7. Around Wittenberg

Lesson 6 – *The Schmalkalden Experience*

1. History and Politics of the Time
2. The Smalcald Articles' Principle Content
3. Melancthon Intrigue
4. "Treatise On the Power and Primacy of the Pope"
5. Luther's Last Days

Lesson 7 – *The Formula of Concord and History of Confessional Lutheranism*

1. The Reason for Being
 2. Predecessor Documents
 3. *The Book of Concord* Table of Contents (1580)
 4. Importance of Acceptance and Doctrinal Unity
 5. Lutheran Confessional Evolution in Germany and the U.S.
 6. What has Happened to Lutheran Church Bodies Since Immigration to the USA?
 7. Closing Comments
- Annexes: Selected prefaces from *The Book of Concord*

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