**Lutheran**

The Lutheran Church is the oldest Protestant Christian tradition, dating back to the Protestant Reformation and the person of Martin Luther. Lutherans are those Christians who choose to accept Martin Luther's teachings. On October 31, 1517, Luther, a Catholic monk, posted his 95 Theses as a challenge to the doctrine and practices of the Roman Catholic Church, hoping to reform the practices he felt were inconsistent with scripture. When the conflict escalated to a distinct separation with the Roman Catholic Church, those who accepted Luther's reforms became "Lutherans." Based on Luther's own writings, Lutherans still uphold Luther's theological teachings such as sola scriptura (scripture as the primary authority for faith and life), justification by the grace of God alone, and salvation through faith in Christ alone. Luther's many theological ideas have since been collected into the Book of Concord, which is still an authority in Lutheran doctrine and practice. Because of its initial grounding in the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheran worship, more than many other Protestant traditions, has many elements similar to the Catholic style of worship. Lutheranism spread from Germany to most countries across the globe and has become one of the largest Protestant denominations.

**Anabaptist**

Anabaptists (meaning "re-baptizers") represent a radical Protestant tradition tracing its history to the 16th century C.E. reformer Ulrich Zwingli. The Anabaptists were distinct because of their assertion of the necessity of adult baptism, rejecting the infant baptism practiced by the Roman Catholic Church. They believed that true baptism required a public confession of both sin and faith, which could only be accomplished as an adult exercise of free will. Another defining characteristic of Anabaptists is their belief in the separation of church and state, and the concept that the church represents the community of saved. Even though the Anabaptist movement began in Zurich, Switzerland, it quickly spread to Moravia and throughout Germany. Many Anabaptists were persecuted in Europe, by both Roman Catholics and other Protestant groups, and most Anabaptist leaders were executed by the end of the 16th century C.E. However, in northern Germany and the Netherlands, pacifist Anabaptists rallied under the leadership of Menno Simons and survived the persecution. Menno's followers would eventually form the Mennonite tradition and become the only lasting Anabaptist tradition. The Mennonites continue to treasure the teachings of Menno, which include thoughts on pacifism, spirituality, and social ideas. Anabaptists, through the Mennonite tradition, are known for their separation from the world (including a refusal of military service), pacifism, radical discipleship, and simplicity of life.

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**Calvinism**

**Calvinism originated in John Calvin, a French theologian who moved to Geneva, Switzerland, in 1536, where he published his Institutes of Christian Religion. Calvin’s theology was similar to Luther’s, yet highly influenced by Augustinianism, especially in terms of God’s sovereignty and predestination or the belief that God had already determined who was and who was not going to heaven, that all things are under the direct control of God; man does not have free will since he “fell” into sin. Only God’s grace can lead to salvation for man. His belief system caught on, and Geneva soon became a Calvinistic theocracy. Calvinism spread throughout Europe and has greatly influenced Protestant theology for almost 500 years.**

**Catholic**

Roman Catholicism is a worldwide religious tradition of some 1.1 billion members. It traces its history to Jesus of Nazareth, an itinerant preacher in the area around Jerusalem during the period of Roman occupation, in the early 30s of the Common Era. Its members congregate in a communion of churches headed by bishops, whose role originated with the disciples of Jesus. Over a period of some decades after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, the bishops spread out across the world to form a "universal" (Greek, katholikos) church, with the bishop of Rome (traced to the apostle Peter) holding primacy. Today Vatican City — and specifically, Saint Peter's Basilica — stands over the grave of Peter, and the pope is considered Peter's successor. Catholic Christianity began as a persecuted religious community, illegal in the Roman Empire in its earliest days, but within some three hundred years and with the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, it became legal and eventually was recognized as the official religion of the Empire. With the decline and fall of Rome in the 5th century, the Roman Church assumed both temporal and spiritual authority in the West; it thus had enormous influence on the development of the art and culture of the western world through the Middle Ages. Today, its growth is fastest in Africa, South America, and Asia.

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|  | Lutheran | Calvinist | Anabaptist | Catholic |
| Where did this religion originate? Or spread from? |  |  |  |  |
| Who is credited with starting the Reformation for this religion? |  |  |  |  |
| What are the ideas of these reformers or beliefs? |  |  |  |  |
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