

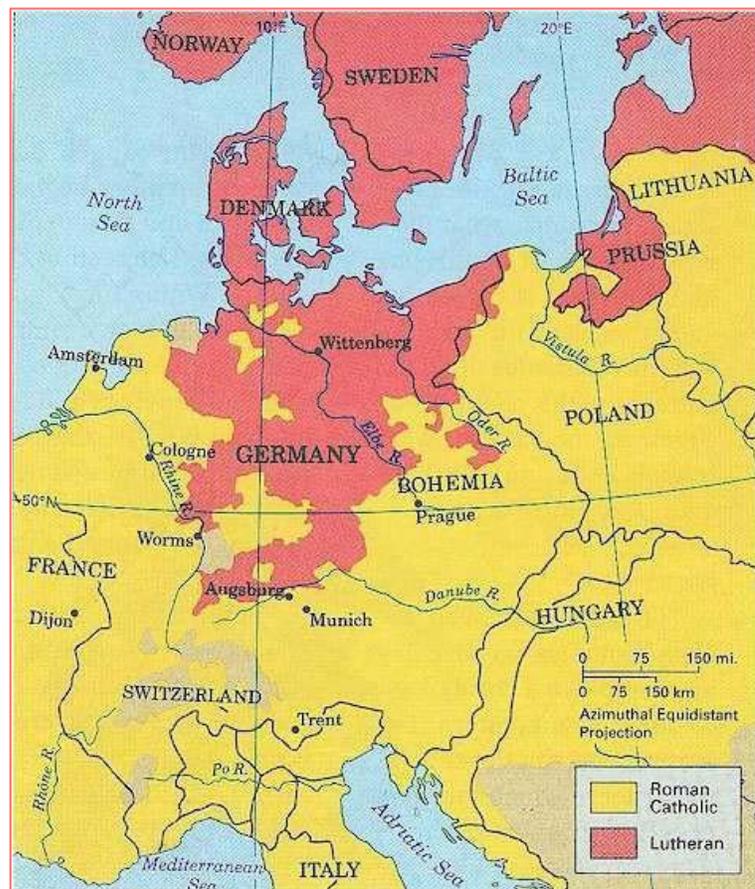
#841 The Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg – The Muhlenbergs and Just War, part 1, Henry Muhlenberg: The Founder of the Lutheran Church in America



Key Understanding: *Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (September 6, 1711 – October 7, 1787).* Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (pictured on the left) was born on September 6, 1711, in Einbeck, Hanover, Germany. He is considered to be the founder of the Lutheran Church in the United States and was the patriarch of the Muhlenberg family dynasty in America.

Lutherans. Lutherans make up the largest Protestant denomination in the world. The Lutheran Church was founded on doctrines and beliefs voiced by Protestant Reformation leader Martin Luther. The Augsburg Confession of 1530 became the statement of faith of the Lutheran Church. The Reformation began in Germany on October 31, 1517. It established Protestantism. By 1600, most people in northern and central **Germany** had become Protestants. Those in the west, south, and southeast remained Roman Catholic. These religious groups remain about the same today.

Many Lutherans live in the Scandinavian countries of Europe. In fact, Lutheranism is the state religion of **Sweden**, where the king must be a member, and all Swedes whose parents belong to the Lutheran Church become members automatically at birth. They remain so unless they apply to withdraw. Of course, many Swedes do not attend church regularly, but the churches are full on religious holidays. In **Finland**, the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the state church, and the national government has supreme authority over it. A very high percentage of Finns are Evangelical Lutherans. In **Norway**, the Norwegian Constitution establishes the Evangelical Lutheran Church as the nation's official church. The government largely controls the Evangelical Lutheran Church. It appoints the pastors and church officials and pays their salaries. Other religious groups have complete freedom of worship. In **Denmark**, a huge portion of the population belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the official church of the nation. The church is supported largely by a national tax paid only by

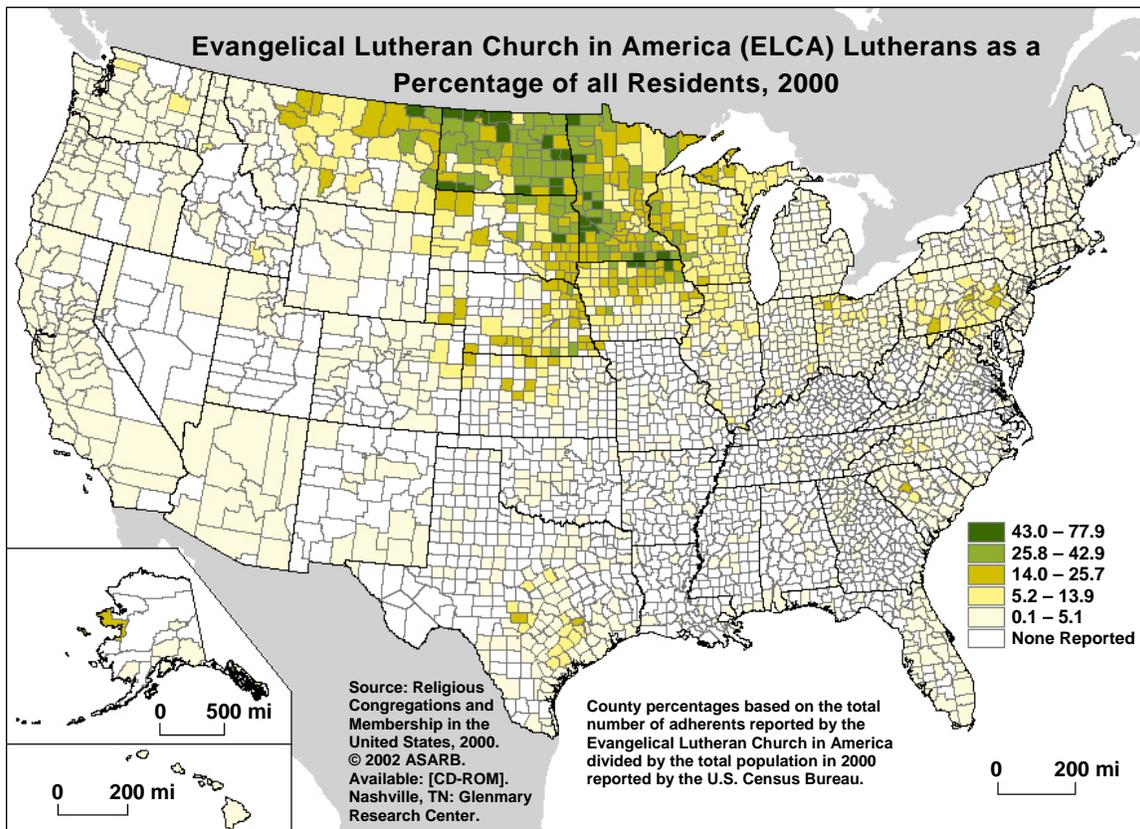


members. The monarch is required by law to belong to the church, though the people have complete freedom of religion.

There are a number of Lutheran nations of this world, but . . .

*John 18:36 (KJV) Jesus answered, **MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD**: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

America. In America, many Lutherans arrived in the 1700's, settling largely in Pennsylvania and New York. Lutheran churches had largely been founded by lay ministry, but sought formally trained clergy. Henry Muhlenberg had entered the ministry in Germany and now answered the call, accepting an appointment as pastor to Lutherans in Pennsylvania in 1742. When he arrived in Philadelphia from Germany in November 1742, he found weak and divided congregations. Gradually, Muhlenberg's work developed. In 1748, a most significant step was taken. Six Lutheran ministers and twenty-four lay delegates representing ten congregations met in Philadelphia. Muhlenberg himself presided at the conference, or synod, which later became known as the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. This was the beginning of the organizing of the Lutheran Church in America.



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