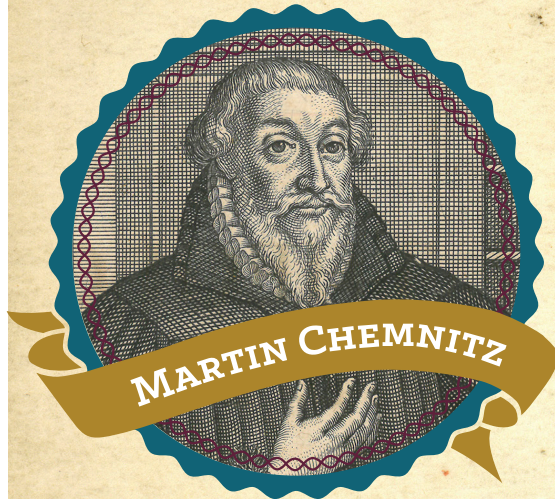


FACES OF THE REFORMATION

MARTIN CHEMNITZ

Born: Nov. 9, 1522 | Treuenbrietzen, Germany

Died: April 8, 1586 | Braunschweig, Germany



REFORMATION
2017 It's *Still* All About
Jesus

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The “Second Martin” Who Faithfully Detailed the Doctrines of the Reformation

THE REFORMATION — often depicted as a radical break with the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church that resulted in the creation of a new church — actually began with a more modest goal: education reform. Dr. Martin Luther and his colleague Philipp Melancthon wanted to change the way theology was taught at the University of Wittenberg; they wanted to shift the focus of theological commentary to the original source, the Bible. It was not until nearly a decade after the publication of the 95 Theses that reorganizing the church in Saxony, once an afterthought, had become a practical necessity. When in June 1530 Emperor Charles V refused to accept the Augsburg Confession, and military conflict seemed unavoidable, the break with Rome became a more permanent reality. Now those territories in which the Reformation had taken root had to restructure their churches. Johannes Brenz and Johannes Bugenhagen took the lead in developing church orders for evangelical territories, but this need would extend also into the next generation.

Among those who picked up the baton, few demonstrated as much practical administrative talent and theological depth as Martin Chemnitz. Remembered today mainly for his literary contributions — many of which have been translated into English, including his *Loci Theologici*, *The Two Natures in Christ* and *Examination of the Council of Trent* — as well as for his role as an author of the Formula of Concord, most of Chemnitz's professional life was devoted to his work as a church administrator and organizer. For nearly 30 years, until his failing health forced him to resign, Chemnitz served first as assistant superintendent (coadjutor) and then as superintendent of the churches in the city of Braunschweig. In this capacity, Chemnitz was responsible for examining pastoral candidates, providing congregations with competent ministers, instructing clergy, preaching, and maintaining unity and discipline among pastors. While serving under his good friend Joachim Moerlin, Chemnitz and Moerlin were invited to reorganize the churches in Prussia. Moerlin continued to serve in Prussia, and in 1567 Chemnitz succeeded his friend as superintendent of Braunschweig. To fulfill a requirement for this new position, Chemnitz took a doctorate from the University of Rostock in 1568, and in the same year was invited by Duke Julius to oversee the reformation of the duchy of Braunschweig-Wolfenbuettel, the last German duchy to be reformed.

During his time in Braunschweig-Wolfenbuettel, Chemnitz worked alongside Jakob Andreae, another author of the Formula of Concord. This relationship, though at times tense, proved to be fruitful. As a church organizer in Prussia and the duchy of Braunschweig, Chemnitz had insisted upon symbols or confessions — like the Augsburg Confession, the Apology and the Smalcald Articles — to ensure doctrinal unity among clergy. Chemnitz's commitment to doctrinal unity and his ability to clearly articulate doctrine while avoiding extremes, along with Andreae's tireless efforts at promoting Lutheran unity among German territories and cities, resulted in the widespread adoption of the Formula of Concord, the capstone of the Book of Concord and the standard for Lutheran unity even today.

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