

Intro:

“The modern Baptist denomination originated in England and Holland in the early seventeenth century. Baptists emerged out of intense reform movements, shaped by such radical dissent as Puritanism, Separatism, and possibly Anabaptism. Influenced by the Reformation theology of **Ulrich Zwingli** and **John Calvin**, the **English Bible**, and a **deep desire for spiritual reform**, some of these Separatists adopted baptism for believers only. They later applied that baptism by total immersion and were nicknamed ‘Baptists’ for that practice.”

Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman Press, 1987), 21.

Influential names:

- John Smyth
- Thomas Helwys
- Henry Jessey
- Roger Williams

The first part of this unit will work up to John Smyth, who might be called the first real Baptist. This will take us a couple of weeks!

“The beginnings ... of the Baptist story highlight one of the most vital aspects of this narrative: it is a history of the intertwined lives of men and women, some of whom still loom large in this fifth century since Baptists began as a small sect in the English-speaking world.” (11)

The three sources of the Baptist idea

- The Anabaptists
- The Puritans
- The Separatists

I. The Anabaptists

A. A product of the REFORMATION

1. Time of spiritual awakening and doctrinal discovery
2. Time of division between Protestant and Catholic
3. But a continuation of church and state in cooperative effort

B. A handful of men opposed church/state cooperation

1. Advocated churches made up solely of believers (opposed infant baptism, automatic church membership)
2. Called 'Anabaptists' because they believed and practiced believer's baptism, requiring a second 'baptism' for the people coming out of the old church
3. Note: Anabaptists generally baptized by pouring or sprinkling

C. Early Anabaptist baptisms:

1. First: In Switzerland, Conrad Grebel baptized George Blaurock by affusion (pouring), Jan 21, 1525
2. A month later, Grebel baptized Wolfgang Ulimann by immersion [not usual method]
3. Early German Anabaptists also used affusion (Hans Hut: might dip his finger in water, make a cross on the forehead, in accordance with the 'seal' of Rev 7.3)

D. Anabaptist view of salvation:

1. Faith alone – Balthasar Hubmaier, "faith alone makes us righteous before God"
2. But an active faith – Hubmaier, faith is full of "all sorts of works of brotherly love toward others"

E. Negative views of Anabaptists

- Seen as a threat to the security and stability of the state (antagonism to union of church and state)

F. Resulted in many Anabaptist executions, including

1. Balthasar Hubmaier, burned at the stake in Vienna, 1528 by Roman Catholics
2. Felix Manz, drowned in Lmmat River, Zurich, by Protestants

G. Radical Anabaptists in Munster, Germany

1. Occupied Munster by force of arms
2. Ruled by two men, established a theocracy

3. All property held in common, legalized polygamy
4. Punished adultery with death
5. Only lasted about a year, crushed by a Catholic army, June 1535
6. Not a good representation of Anabaptists, but became the poster boy for opponents wishing to smear all Anabaptists

Conclusion: “remarkable similarities” but no identity

- Because it is possible for disparate groups to come to similar Biblical conclusions independently
- Because Baptists deliberately rejected the term Anabaptist (due to unsavory connotation), thus making it difficult to discern any real ties
- Because the more obvious source of Baptist ideas is seen in the development of the English Separatists, themselves descended from the Puritans