

Dutch Reformed Church Origins: 6 Things That Led to Development of Christian Denomination

By Jerry Shaw | Friday, 06 Feb 2015 12:34 PM

The Dutch Reformed Church grew out of the Christian denominations that formed in the Netherlands during the Protestant Reformation that separated from the Roman Catholic Church. The Reformed Church encouraged the Christian standards of forgiveness and fidelity.

These six occurrences developed the Dutch Reformed Church:

1. The Protestant Reformation in the Netherlands followed the Calvinist movement, which put an emphasis on attaining salvation through the faith in God. [The Reformed Church](#) emerged in the 1570s in the northern provinces of the Netherlands.
2. A foundation for the new church was established during a special council in 1571. Guidelines were arranged using principles from the Presbyterian Church, but with additions that included reformed ideas that accepted people as they are and encouraged them to improve their standing according to Christian principles.
3. The northern provinces of the Netherlands declared their independence from Spain in 1581. This helped increase involvement by people in the Reformed Church.
4. The Reformed Church grew stronger with Dutch settlers who came to New Amsterdam in 1628 when a congregation called the [Reformed Protestant Dutch Church](#) was established. The Reformed Church remained the established church of the colony until the English took over the area in 1664, though the church kept growing.
5. The Dutch Reformed Church maintained its independence during the time the British ruled America and after the American Revolution. The church declared itself independent of Amsterdam in 1754, though it still had ties to the Netherlands until 1819. It was involved in the development of Queens College, now Rutgers University, in 1766 and the New Brunswick Theological Seminary. In the 1790s, the church adopted a formal constitution and held its first general assembly.
6. In 1819, the church was incorporated as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church and then changed to the Reformed Church in America in 1867. It has more than 300,000 members in the U.S. and was one of the founding members of the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. It merged with other churches in the Netherlands where some conservative Christians did not merge but formed a Restored Reformed Church.