

Writer of Protestantism's first systematic theology, *Loci communes rerum theologicarum*, published in 1521, Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560) was a colleague of Martin Luther at Wittenberg University and a close friend of Luther's for many years. Though he was born Philipp Schwartzerdit in Bretten, Germany, his uncle and teacher called him "Melanchthon," the Greek version of his last name (meaning "black earth") for his achievement in Latin and Greek. He was a teacher of classics and philosophy as well as the author of numerous treatises, translations (including a revision of Luther's translation of the New Testament), and biblical commentaries. While Luther was confined in the Wartburg in 1521, Melanchthon headed the Reformation in Germany. During the controversy on Eucharistic doctrine, from 1525 to 1536, he was a solid supporter of Luther against the followers of Ulrich Zwingli.

The chief architect of both the *Augsburg Confession* (1530) and *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (1531), Melanchthon was often criticized for his conciliatory views towards Roman Catholicism. He was hailed as a major innovator in German education and seen by some as the primary organizer of the German public school system. His teachings on free will, known as synergism—cooperation between God and man—caused many to accuse him of being too humanistic. He faced strong objections from strict Lutherans due to his continued work to create areas of agreement with some Catholic views. He died in Wittenberg on April 19, 1560.

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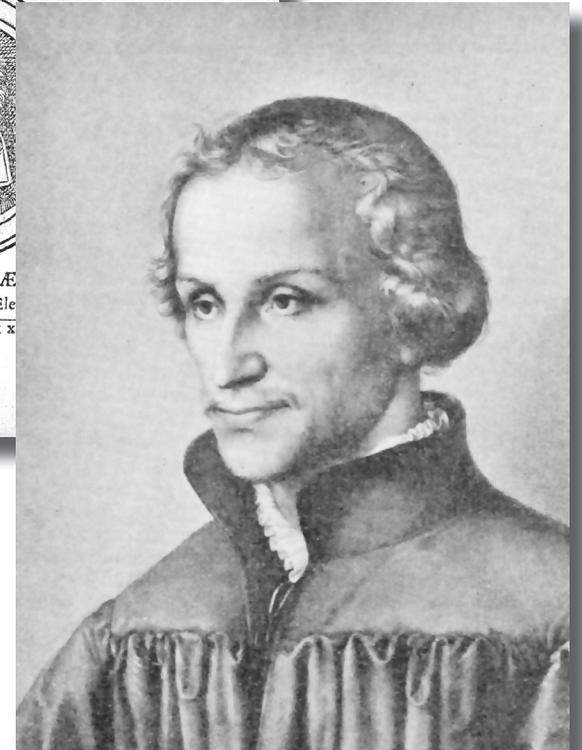
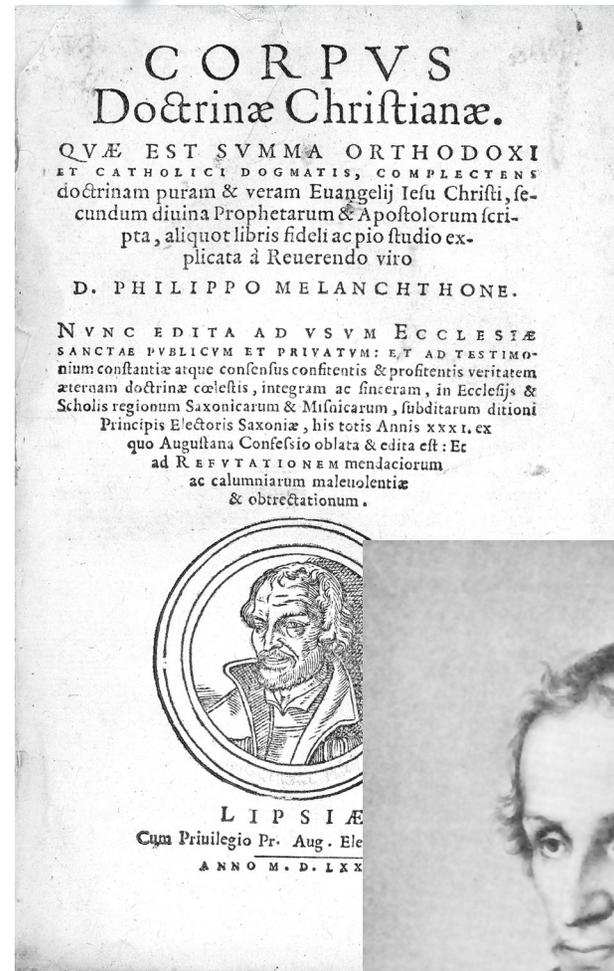
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**Cover:** Philipp Melanchthon and *Corpus doctrinae Christianae*, "Body of Christian Doctrine," a textbook of Protestant theology compiled from the writings of Melanchthon, including the *Augsburg Confession*, his *Apology of the Confession*, and his *Loci communes* ("Commonplaces"), Leipzig, 1572 (PHS).

# Reformation Sunday



Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560)  
German Reformer